



**Brighter
Communities**
Worldwide

CREATING BETTER FUTURES

Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights



2021 Programme Report & 2022 Programme plans

www.brightercommunities.org

Follow us



@4abrighterworld



Brighter Communities Worldwide

Email: info@brightercommunities.org

Telephone: Ireland +353 21 4621748 Kenya +254 723 472809

Ireland - CHY 16505 • CRA 20059583

Kenya – OP 218/051/2005/0295/3731

Contents

About Brighter Communities	3
International women’s Day – March 2021	4
Objectives of our month of activities:	4
Communities reached	4
Menstrual Hygiene Day 2021	5
Introduction.....	5
Activities	5
Menstrual Health Ambassador Programme	6
2021 Workshops	7
1. Growth and Body Changes.....	7
2. Reproductive Health	7
3. About Reusable Sanitary pads	7
4. Challenges to Menstrual Hygiene Management	8
6. Games and sports.....	9
Plans for 2022	10
Acknowledgements	10

Cover photo – Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights Ambassadors in Kapkwen Community

About Brighter Communities

Brighter Communities Worldwide (BCW) is an NGO which has been working in community development in East Africa since 2002. Brighter Communities Worldwide community development model considers the whole community, enabling individuals and communities to be authors of their own development, building brighter communities for all. Our model creates an enabling environment for communities to realise change and uses a partnership-based approach to deliver relevant programmes to meet the needs of communities and individuals.

Creating brighter communities means ensuring:

- Access to good, affordable healthcare;
- Education to help people find a job and be able to articulate their needs;
- An income that can sustain a family; and
- Healthier lives with a supply of clean water and better facilities.

Our vision

A world where strong, healthy communities can thrive, building sustainable livelihoods and brighter futures

Our mission

To work in partnership with communities, to deliver programmes that enrich their lives and help create better futures for them and their families.

Our values

Our values underpin everything we do and every decision we make. They also help communicate the way we work and how we do things.

- Integrity - We are an organisation built on integrity and good governance with a track record for success.
- Passion - We work passionately in all that we do to realise our vision across communities.
- Togetherness - We work together with all our stakeholders; all programmes are based on community needs as identified by themselves.

Our values are based on the way we work:

- As advocates for people who don't have a voice
- In partnership with local people, officials, NGOs and governments
- Giving people the tools to build on what they already have
- Building on the traditional way of doing things to improve lives for everyone.



Girls and women in Cheptuiyet Community Unit

March 2021

International women's Day – March 2021

International women's day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action in accelerating women's achievement and equality. This day is marked annually on March 8th across the globe. Significant activities are witnessed worldwide as groups come together to celebrate women's achievements or rally for their equality.

The **theme** for this year was “**Choose to Challenge**” and its aim was to challenge inequality, call out bias, question stereotypes and help forge an inclusive world.

Objectives of our month of activities:

- To celebrate International Women's Day across communities particularly focusing on the #choosetochallenge theme!
- To Celebrate Women's achievements,
- To raise awareness about women's issues and challenges in the community – Sexual and Reproductive health; FGM/C and Poverty

Communities reached

This year's celebration of international women's day was different due to COVID -19 pandemic. Due to the pandemic, we pivoted our activities to reach as many people as possible across Kericho County.

All women and men who attended international women's day were required to strictly observe all Ministry of Health guidelines that included; washing hands with soap and water, maintaining social distancing and wearing of masks at all times. All venues had posters reminding all attendees to keep social distance, wear face masks, wash hands and on signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

We reached **416** participants (**17** men, **399** women) across **16** communities.



International Women's Day celebrations

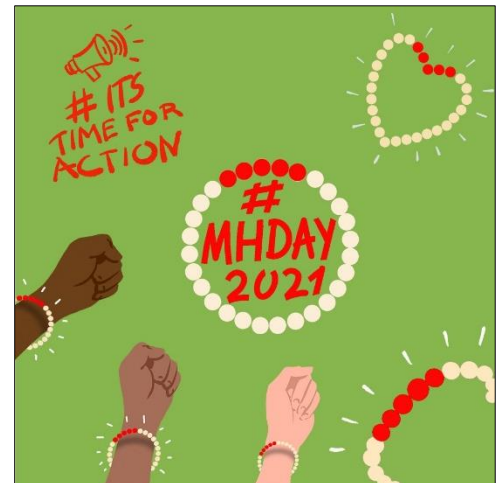
Menstrual Hygiene Day 2021

Introduction

Menstrual Hygiene Day is marked on May 28th every year. It is a global advocacy platform that brings together the voices and actions of non-profits, government agencies, individuals, the private sector and the media to promote good menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) for all women and girls. More specifically, Menstrual Hygiene Day:

- Breaks the silence, raises awareness and changes negative social norms around MHH
- Engages decision-makers to increase the political priority and promote action for MHH, at global, national and local levels.

Millions of women and girls are suffering with their menstrual hygiene and health since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and successive lockdowns. Measures such as restricted movements and closures of some businesses has caused devastating economic effects. Many are missing meals, have lost work and people are struggling. Lack of resources and poverty are impacting the ability of people to manage their menstruation and health. Poorest sections of the society have been the worst affected in accessing menstrual hygiene products. Since COVID-19 began we have trained 340 community volunteers to be ambassadors for menstrual health in various communities, they assist in sensitization on sexual and reproductive health and the distribution of starter kits which has enabled the organisation to reach more people.



The theme for this year's Menstrual Hygiene day was "**Action and Investment in Menstrual Hygiene and Health.**"

Activities

The aim of Menstrual Hygiene Day was - To Educate, Eradicate stigma and end period poverty.

The main objectives of celebrating this day were:

- To break Taboos and myths surrounding menstruation
- To reduce stigma surrounding menstrual health
- To highlight the importance of good menstrual hygiene management (MHM)
- To educate all the participants on how to make reusable sanitary kits from local available materials.
- To advocate for the integration of Menstrual Hygiene (MH) management into global, national and local policies and programs via our social media campaign
- To sensitize all participants on COVID - 19 precautionary measures including COVID - 19 vaccine sensitization.

To comply with COVID-19 restrictions and reach as many communities in Kericho County as possible, we spread our programme activities and celebrations across the month of May. All recommendations to prevent COVID-19 transmission as advised by the Ministry of Health were followed across all workshops. These included; restricting the number of people attending; Hand washing; wearing of facemasks and keeping social distance. The targeted audience included men, women, girls and boys. The days were very interactive including different



Ndarugu Women during Menstrual Hygiene Day-May 2021

activities including workshops, games and sports - all geared towards offering education and breaking the silence on menstrual health issues. A total of **269** people attended **19** workshops (**254F, 15M**). The actual day was celebrated on Friday 28th May in Ndarugu, Kipkelion East Sub-County.



Menstrual Health Ambassador Programme

Our menstrual health programme originated in the schools and spread out into the community after requests from girls in schools to share information with their mothers, and requests from women's groups for information and education around sexual and reproductive health. With the arrival of COVID-19 the need for supporting menstrual health grew across the communities. We had to find a new way to deliver the programme and the idea of local volunteers training as Menstrual Health Ambassadors was born with the aim of strengthening menstrual health across the County.

The programme has a number of objectives:

- To create awareness about menstrual health among all community members – men, women, boys and girls.
- To contribute towards the elimination of violence against women through ensuring that girls remain in school, understand their rights, have alternatives to early marriage and lessen the risk of early pregnancy.
- To encourage confidence in girls and women to take part fully in education, learn the skills needed to earn a living and believe in themselves so they and their families will stay healthy and safe from hunger and poverty.
- To break myths and taboos surrounding menstrual health in the community.
- To eradicate the stigmatization of girls and women due to menstrual health.
- To work with all partners involved to tackle challenges around menstrual health

In 2021, through the Menstrual Health Ambassador Programme the following was achieved.

- **201** men and women across **21** communities were trained as ambassadors. These trainings took place in small groups.
- **In total they have sensitized 9,225 people (3,122 girls, 781 boys, 4,166 women and 1,156 men)** across **21** community units in 4 Sub Counties.
- **1,547** vulnerable girls and **1,720** vulnerable women were provided with starter kits

While sensitizing on menstrual health, the Ambassadors demonstrated to participants how to make reusable sanitary pads from locally available materials (t-shirts). This enabled girls and women to add to their starter kit and ensure they are comfortable throughout their period. After a few months, the ambassadors followed up with all participants and results show that 57% of girls and 37% of women sensitised are making their own sanitary kits.

All sensitization activities and workshops were implemented taking COVID-19 precautions into account – handwashing, social distance and mask wearing. Numbers were limited according to the Ministry of Health guidelines

2021 Workshops

A number of workshops were included in all menstrual health sessions throughout the year

1. Growth and Body Changes

The purpose was to increase awareness and understanding of puberty among women and girls. This was done using charts of girls' drawing and discussions on various topics including:

- What is Puberty?
- How girls bodies change during puberty.
- How to keep clean during puberty



2. Reproductive Health

The aim of this session was:

- To increase awareness on menstrual cycle and reproductive health systems amongst the participants through access to facts and information.
- To provide the participants with a safe space to discuss issues surrounding reproductive health in relation to menstruation.

Tapestries depicting the female reproductive health system and the menstrual cycle assisted participants with learning and understanding. We have two sizes – large to use with the full group and a series of smaller ones for small group discussions.



Participants and BCW staff discussing reproductive health - May 2021

3. About Reusable Sanitary pads

Demonstration of reusable sanitary pad preparation using locally available materials introduced participants in the workshops to sustainable solutions to Menstrual Hygiene Management. They learned about reusable sanitary kits how to use them, how to clean and take care of them and how to make their own pads and underwear using fabric from old cloths e.g. cotton t-shirts.



Participants making reusable sanitary pad, and demonstrating how to care for them – May 2021

4. Challenges to Menstrual Hygiene Management

Here we had interactive sessions which aimed:

- To increase awareness of challenges surrounding menstruation amongst the participants
- To provide participants with a space where they can discuss challenges facing them during menstruation focusing on three areas – Personal, Family and Community challenges.



Participant in Kaboloin discussing challenges they faced in their community unit- May 2021

The challenges discussed included:

Financial

- The expense of sanitary towels for those who can buy
- Lack of money to buy the sanitary towels for the struggling families.

Emotional

- Lack of support from family members.
- What girls & women can and cannot do during menstruation.

Physical

- Lack of proper hygiene supplies, like water, pads, and proper disposal areas in the community is a major challenge too.
- Inaccessibility to sanitary pads leads to women missing work and girls missing classes. This is resulting in - school dropouts and early pregnancies and marriages from an increase in transactional sex for money to buy sanitary pads.
- Lack of awareness by the community members. Discussions were held on menstruation related taboos practised within the families as well as communities which have resulted to various problems.

6. Games and sports

Games were used as part of Menstrual Hygiene Day to break barriers and sensitize on the importance of menstrual health education, the importance of exercise during menstruation and the ability to feel you can carry on as normal during your periods – they don't inhibit you if managed correctly



Women and girls participating in various games and sports across various workshops in 2021

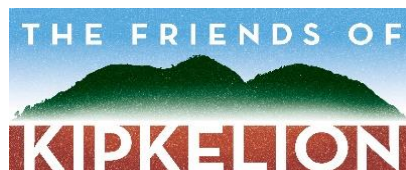
Plans for 2022

- Continue supporting and developing our Menstrual Health Programme to reach more vulnerable girls and women across Kericho County through sensitisation and training more Ambassadors across communities.
- Finalise the development of a Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) manual for men, women, boys and girls.
- Support local community groups who wish to engage in sanitary pad making as a business.
- Implement at least 15 SRHR Ambassador Training Workshops each with 15 participants
- Implement at least 8 x 1 Day Community Unit SRHR Workshops each with 17 participants
- Implement at least 15 x 1 Day MHM Workshops for women in the community each with 30 participants
- Implement at least 15 x 1 Day SRHR Workshops for men and women in the community each with 30 participants
- Sensitisation of at least 2,000 youths (girls and boys) on menstrual health across Kericho
- Provide sustainable, reusable sanitary kits provided for at least 1,000 women and 1,000 girls.



Acknowledgements

We are extremely grateful for the support we have received throughout this period from our partners, donors and supporters in Kenya, Ireland and around the world. This support takes the form of financial through grant funding and response to our fundraising appeals; motivation and encouragement from friends and our supporter group and a huge sense of solidarity across all those involved in this programme.



**S.H.A.R.P. Staff of HSE
(Cork and Kerry)
Association**

Asanteni sana!