



CPAR Uganda Menstrual Hygiene Campaign 2023



May 2023: Susan, Norah and Precious, are at a one-day high-level intellectual study group session at a prestigious resort in the city. We are highly schooled women of substance who are known for our professionalism and positively impactful contributions in our respective communities. Of the 12 participants at the session, we are the only three women; the other nine are men. We are development actors, media practitioners and personalities of different ages – decades apart. We get talking and realise that we have something else in common as women. Each one of us at sometime has had to carry in our handbags used pads or tampons for lack of disposal infrastructure. In Uganda, while we are in public spaces, we often find ourselves where there are no period-friendly toilets.

Even the resort we were at in the photo had no or insufficient period infrastructure. The two toilets for ladies in different locations at the resort that we used, both did not provide used pads or tampons disposal containers. Meaning that if we had been in our periods, we would have had to carry our used pads and or tampons in our hand bags until we got home where we could dispose of them.

We have a lightbulb moment. Each one of us is in a key position to do something about it. We agree to team up on a CPAR Uganda menstrual hygiene campaign to:

- 1) Generate empirical data on the extent of the problem. We want confirmation of our hypothesis that the majority of establishments – hotels, restaurants, resorts, conference centres, meeting venues, etc., including so-called high-end ones, in Uganda do not adequately provide period-friendly toilets. From 8th to 20th May 2023, we will conduct fact finding surveys in four districts in Uganda in at least three different sub-regions. We target to conduct face-to-face surveys with at least 100 people and to do sight visits to at least 20 establishments – 5 per district.

During the same period, we will run online surveys open to all – Ugandans and visitors to Uganda, past and present. Our target is to get at least 500 online survey respondents.

- 2) From 21st to 28th May, we will raise consciousness among Ugandan men and women about the indignities that women go through when period-friendly toilets are not provided. We will do so by sponsoring and or convincing media houses – radio stations preferably – to hold talk shows during which our survey findings and their implications shall be discussed. Among the panellists should be politicians, legislators, owners and users of public establishments. Our target is that at least four radio talk shows are held in community radios with deep reach in the four districts in which we will conduct the survey. We will make ourselves available as panellists on television programmes and online discussion forums.

We will also use Twitter, Facebook and the CPAR Uganda website to disseminate our survey findings and to ignite conversations.

Our call to action for this campaign is two-fold

- Provisioning of period-friendly toilets for all. Our theory of change is to target and convince meeting and conference organisers, especially, as a start, female led organisations, to include and demand in their procurement checklists availability of period-friendly toilets before an establishment is pre-qualified to be used by them. This will cause service providers to become consciously aware of the need to make provision of user-friendly toilets in order not to lose business.
- Fundraising. We target to convince individual donors via our CPAR Uganda GlobalGiving page to make donations. We hope to convince at least one funding agency to give us grant funding annually to carryout activities focused on menstrual health. Including, but not limited to conducting empirical research. For example, the first topic we are interested in researching are the pros and cons of re-usable pads. Are they truly the better option for the poor as they are touted? What are the intersectional issues not accounted for? How are they or not a manifestation, perpetuation or solution to period-poverty? These and other questions such as these need to be asked, discussed and appropriate interventions made for the greater good of all humankind.

With effect from 2023, our target is to annually raise at least Ug. Shs. 20,000,000 (twenty million shillings), which is about US\$ 5,370, for our menstrual hygiene work.