



IRISE INSTITUTE EASTAFRICA ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Table of content

Foreword from Chairperson

Message from the Regional Director

ACRONYMS

PPS	Period positive Schools
IIEA	Irise Institute East Africa
MHE	Menstrual Hygiene Education
BFSS	British and Foreign school Society
YWS	Young Water Solution
WD23	Women's Deliver 2023
TPEN	The Period Equality Network
HEYPI	Health for Youth with Parents involved
WEH	We Empower Her
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
FDG	Focus Group Discussion
ARV's	Antiretrovirals
CSOs	Civil society organisations
MHM	Menstrual Health Management
MHH	Menstrual Health and Hygiene



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Our Impact in 2023.

We directly contributed to the lives of (10,454) people in 2023

Menstrual Hygiene Education (5507)

Community engagements (3214)

Product distribution to students (4800)

Advocacy and Menstrual Health (1808)

Strategic and Line Ministry engagement (38)

Small Grants , Capacity building , collective advocacy (CSO's) – 25 Grassroot Organisations

Context

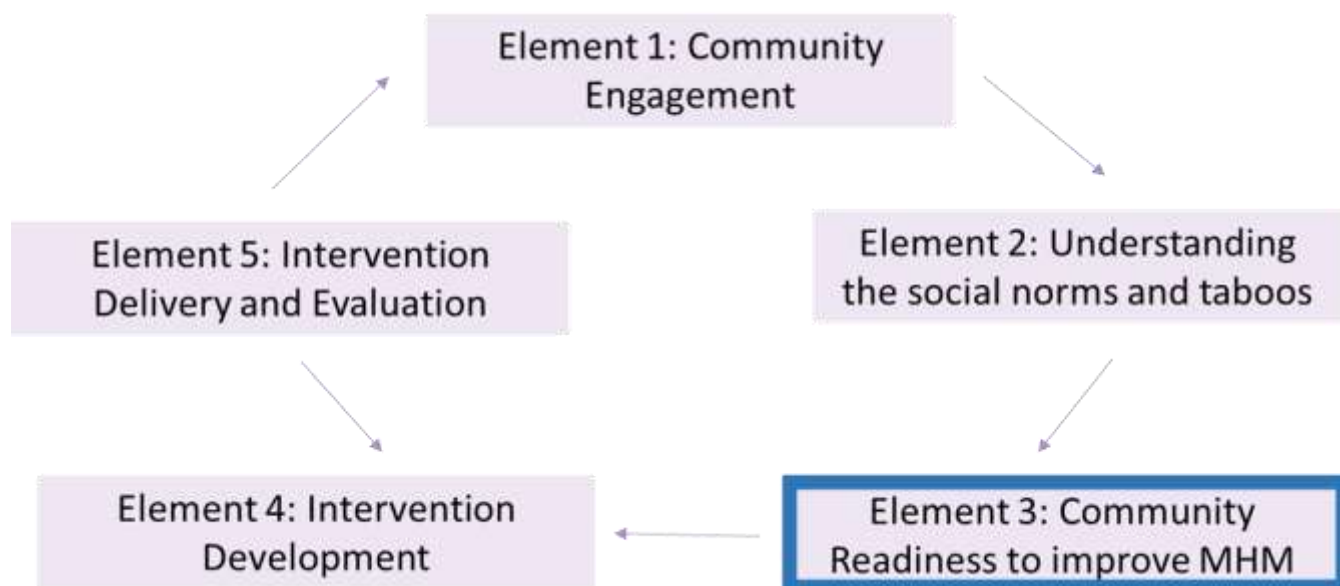
In 2023 , IIEA prioritized strengthening menstrual Health management to tackle the barriers that cause period inequalities among girls and women. Programs focused on bridging the gaps on issues of menstrual health education and awareness in support of menstruating girls and product access to attain menstrual equity .Addressed menstrual injustices that cause shame and stigma using the human rights approach in the context of how culture , religion and social norms affect women and girls to deny them opportunities.

Considering these challenges, IIEA programs in MHM sector used the community readiness to change model which integrates a community's, culture, resources and level of readiness , more effectively to address issues .This approach enabled communities to define their issues and develop strategies in their own contexts.

PERIOD POSITIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Our Period Positive Schools Program, supported by Irise International, has been creating period-friendly and positive environments in nine schools around Jinja District and the surrounding communities since 2021. The programme empowers local stakeholders, including girls, teachers, and local government officials, to tackle the challenges girls face during their periods. It follows a three-pronged approach: ending the shame through peer-led girls' clubs supported by champion teachers, creating an enabling environment where school and community champions provide menstrual health education and improve school facilities, and institutionalizing change by working with local government to introduce period-friendly policies and integrate menstrual health into routine monitoring and existing programmes. This programme is delivered using the community Readiness to change approach, ensuring sustainable and impactful results.

Community Readiness to change Model



This Element involves assessing the community's level of readiness to change by applying the REPLACE Community Readiness Change Model

COVA PROGRAMME

With support from the Cova Project, IIEA has been implementing the Flow Cup Project as a sustainable menstrual management option to increase access for girls and women in rural and underprivileged communities across Uganda. Through the project, IIEA focuses on promoting reusable menstrual flow cups, which are cost-effective and

environmentally friendly. Menstrual flow cups minimize negative impacts and are a sustainable, climate-smart product. The cup can last up to 10 years and can be left in for 12 hours at a time, meaning girls are no longer affected by a lack of sanitary bins or adequate wash facilities at their schools or in their communities. They no longer need to worry about their period throughout the day and can simply empty the cup in the privacy of their home, morning and night.

Menstrual Justice Programme

The Menstrual Justice program, is implemented with support from the Foundation for a Just Society, it focuses on strengthening collaborative advocacy for menstrual health justice through the Period Equality Network (TPEN). The programme adopts a human rights and social justice approach, examining the cultural and social norms that affect girls and women of menstruating age. It aims to unpack these norms and behaviors that increase the vulnerability of women and girls to menstrual injustices by working with grassroots organizations, utilizing digital storytelling and feminist art. The programme also strengthens the capacities of TPEN partners for menstrual health advocacy, helping them develop advocacy plans for continuous engagement. Also, it engages stakeholders in menstrual justice knowledge sharing and learning events, targeting menstrual health actors at the grassroots, lower government, and national levels.

Leadership and Governance strengthening Programme.

The leadership and governance strengthening Program, supported by the African Women Development Fund, aims to enhance the governance and leadership capabilities within IIEA (Irise institute East Africa). The program focuses on building the capacity of both the board and staff through various initiatives. These include training and orientation on the IIEA charter, conducting board performance reviews, and review ,development of key policies such as Human Resources and Governance. Development of a succession plan and create a new IIEA website. Facilitate in-house communication training for staff to improve internal communication.

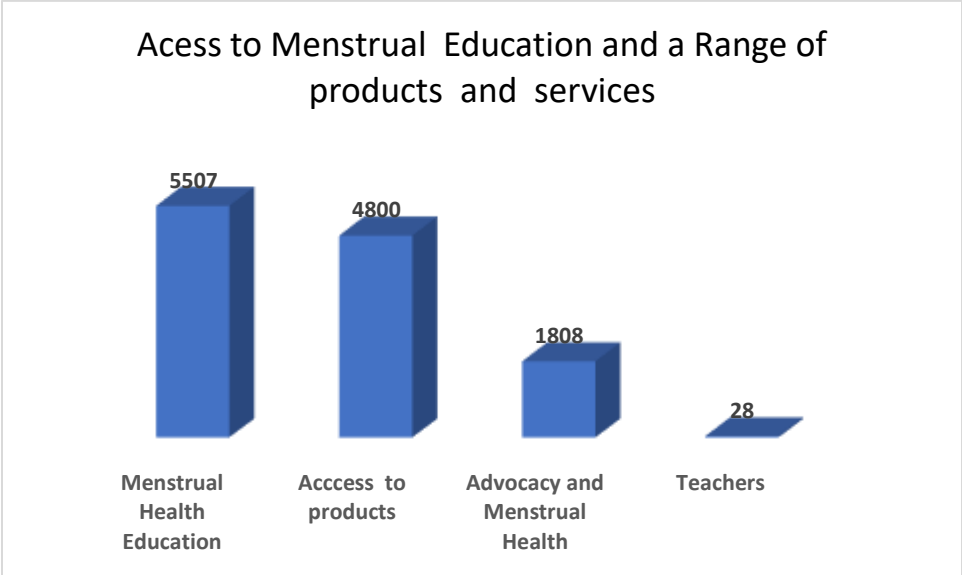
Annual Progress to the strategic objectives .

SECTION 5: RESULT AREAS AND OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

Result Area 1: Access to Comprehensive Menstrual Health Education, product range, SRH and GBV Services as well as safeguarding for young women and girls.

In 2023 our interventions led to the creation of 9 period-positive schools in Butangala Nkondo, Mafubira, Kyomya, Iwololo, Bubugo, Buyengo, Namaganga and St. Ursula special school. By implementing the period-positive schools checklist to assess menstrual-friendly facilities, we have seen significant improvements in school WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) conditions since the project's inception. The 9

Schools now have emergency kits that include changing uniforms, enhanced hygiene in latrines and changing rooms, as well as locks and adequate lighting to ensure privacy for girls during menstruation. Posters have been installed to create a supportive school environment and remind learners and stakeholders to normalize menstruation and dignity during periods . Over 10, 307 girls and women were supported to access menstrual Health education and range of products including :reusable sanitary pads menstrual flow cups were distributed to enable girls and women menstruate with dignity.



Strengthened the capacity of teachers and community structures to promote MHE in school and communities and advocate for reduced stigma on menstruation through community champion engagements.





Delivering refresher MHE sessions in 9 PPS project as follow up for 900 girls and boys and product distribution



Installation of Menstrual health and hygiene talking compounds



Product distribution in primary schools



Enhancing Teacher's Capacity to Implement Menstrual-Friendly Checklist Tool

We are addressing capacity gaps by training teachers and school leadership: including headteachers, senior women and male teachers to routinely assess the condition of school WASH facilities and improve them to ensure that they enable effective hygiene and sanitation practices, that facilitate better menstrual management for girls while they are at school. The approach promotes period friendly school environment and encourages girls to stay in school and focus on their learning outcomes.



Implementing an assessment of school WASH facilities using the menstrual friendly checklist with Jen Moore the researcher and evaluator from Irise International UK.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS AND TRAINING OF COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS





Promoting and Strengthen the participation of local communities

In 2023, IIEA intensified enhancing and promoting the involvement of community structures, specifically community champions, to reduce the stigma surrounding menstruation. The focus was put on developing the skills of community champions to regularly engage with their communities through awareness campaigns and menstrual health education. This approach aimed to address information gaps, correct misconceptions, challenge social norms, and discriminatory practices faced by girls and women. Community dialogues were used as a key strategy to involve a diverse group of participants, including girls, women, boys, men, local community leaders, and resource persons. These dialogues were designed to increase awareness and build support for menstruating individuals, enable a more supportive and informed environment.

Result Area 2: Economic Empowerment and Gender Structural Strengthening

In 2023, Irise partnered with Young Waters Solution (YWS) to conduct a follow-up training session designed to enhance the skills of 20 Rise Up Entrepreneurs. This session focused on acquainting participants with the standards set by the National Bureau of Standards, ensuring that their business practices comply with national regulations and benchmarks. The training took place at Silver Springs Bugolobi, providing a supportive environment for learning and development. As a result of this training, two feminist entrepreneurs were selected for the economic empowerment project "The Pad Project." These 2 initiatives were selected because they demonstrated exceptional potential, had existing business strategies in place which provided a solid foundation. They aim to scale the production of reusable pads in Wakiso and Hoima to increase access to pads for the communities and improve the quality and business skills and approach to be competitive.



Result Area 3: Partnership Building and Policy Advocacy Influencing through Research, documentation and Learning.

POLICY ADVOCACY ENGAGEMENTS

National advocacy spaces: The Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development invited (IIEA) to attend the National Youth Coordination Committee Meeting, we were introduced to a new project by Team Up Uganda that integrated Water, Agriculture, and Health. During the meeting,

IIEA presented her work in ending period poverty through the Period Equality Network East Africa and gained valuable insights into how to introduce and launch new projects with the Ministry while networking with various organizations. We also learned about the importance of working with consortiums that focus on different thematic areas to achieve a common goal.



Participation in the Menstrual Equity Conference

IIEA convened a session during the Menstrual Equity Conference on Saturday 14th October 2023, hosted by the Purple Feminists Group of Myanmar. We convened the Period Equality Network East Africa members and partners to showcase our role in addressing social and cultural injustices associated with menstruation in Uganda. This contributed to the visibility of the organization around the work that we do. Below are some images of the conference.



Radio Talk on the impact period poverty on child marriage

IIEA was invited by the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation Radio to discuss strategic approaches to combat child marriage. During this session, we delved into the issues surrounding child marriage, specifically addressing the impact of period poverty. Our conversation highlighted issues related to access to menstrual products, lack of information, and challenging menstruating environments as contributing factors to the prevalence of child marriages. This awareness session was organized by the UBC Ground Zero hosts.

Below are some images for the session



Period Giving Webinar : IIEA joined the Global Period Giving hub, with the Uganda chapter to discuss domestic period giving through philanthropy. Patricia Humura, our program manager, represented us at the webinar. During her presentation on giving for menstrual equity in East Africa, we understood the importance of seeking resources internally, engaging in communal activities, and utilising period-giving days (such as

Giving Tuesday for Period Giving), and embracing the core value of giving. Below are some branding posters for the event.



Webinar on Schools and Toilets: Menstrual Health and Hygiene Solutions : Represented by the Regional Director, IIEA participated in a campaign by Columbia Mailman School of Public Health, a series of the Period Posse Presents webinars. The Regional Director Lillian Bagala highlighted our contribution to creating period-positive schools in Jinja district.



Commemoration of World AIDS Day: On 1st December we joined our Period Equality Network Member Health for Youth with Parents Involved to commemorate World AIDS Day at the Nansana Health Center. During the event, there was blood donation and free HIV testing through community mobilization activities.

Below are some pictures taken during the event.



Result Area 5 Institutional Capacity growth, strengthening & Development and Fundraising/sub-granting.

Global advocacy spaces: Support Preparations TPEN Members to shape the agenda at the Women Deliver Conference in Kigali – Rwanda

IIEA identified and supported 6 people to participate in WD23 conference -3 TPEN members from Zamara Foundation, Twekonyere and Together Alive Initiative, 1 Government Official and 2 IIEA staff.

- Supported to finalise with Registration for the conference
- Air tickets to attend the conference
- Coordination and Hotel for accommodation

IIEA actively participated in the Global Women Deliver Conference held in Kigali, Rwanda, from July 17th to 20th, 2023, with a youth pre-conference on July 16th. This event provided a platform for four Period Equality Network members and two Irise Institute East Africa staff to engage with influential leaders dedicated to ending gender inequalities. During the conference, IIEA and network members participated in many menstrual health-related sessions, building connections and knowledge sharing with organizations like WASH United, Urgent Action Fund Africa, the Global Menstrual Health Collective, and Global Fund Women, among others. Valuable insights about upcoming opportunities in menstrual health initiatives for 2024 were acquired, including prospects for funding from organizations such as Global Fund Women, Girls Glow, HIVOS East Africa, Urgent Action Fund, and more.

Furthermore, on July 19th, IIEA hosted a session titled "Uniting for Menstrual Justice to Advance Gender Equality." This session facilitated in-depth discussions on various aspects of menstrual justice, including grassroots activism, personal stories, feminist approaches, government initiatives, and the interconnected nature of inequalities within menstrual health. The session raised awareness about global menstrual health inequalities, resulting in an increased number of members from East Africa joining the Period Equality Network East Africa, and sharing opportunities of for mentorship.



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS
Irise International - II visit to Uganda

During this visit, Il had the opportunity to visit three out of nine project schools in Jinja district. The purpose of the visit was to enable the donor to hear directly from the beneficiaries, which included head teachers, senior men and women, and two community champions, about how the project has positively impacted their communities. The schools visited include St. Ursula Special School, Kyomya, and Bubugo. Additionally, we visited the Jinja District local government, where the donor interacted with district officials and gained a general perspective on how the project has impacted the district.



Waterloo Foundation visit to Jinja Uganda

As part of the Waterloo Foundation visit, Tabitha Ndiaye had the opportunity to visit TPEN partners; Faraja Digital, HEYPI, Wabibi Pads and 1 school in Jinja Kyomya primary school a beneficiary of the PPS, out of the 9 project schools. The purpose of the visit was to understand the menstrual health and specifically period positive project interventions and impact on communities, understand the gaps and appreciate the challenges among the beneficiaries, including head teachers, senior men, and women, about how the project has impacted their community. In addition, a courtesy visit to the Jinja District local government, where the team interacted with district officials (1 District Inspector of Schools, 1 District Education Officer, 1 District Education Assistant - in charge of disability and Principal invigilator of the district) Below are the pictures of the Waterloo Foundation donor visit



Virtual Meeting with We Empower Her

IIEA participated in a Zoom meeting with the We Empower Her team to discuss the creating period-positive school project. During the meeting, we highlighted the importance of having an inception meeting with local authorities to introduce the project. We also provided guidance on how to identify community champions, conduct menstrual health sessions, and effectively implement the project. **Support visit to We Empower Her (WEH) in Nakivale Refugee Settlement in Isingiro District.**

2 IIEA (P.O MHE and PA MHE) made a 3-day support visit to WEH to give background of the Period Positive Schools project. During the visit, the team conducted a training of trainers for 5 community champions. Additionally, IIEA supported the We Empower Her team in conducting FDGs on community readiness to change in 2 communities. The purpose of this experience was to demonstrate WEH's hands-on approach to effectively conducting community readiness-to-change sessions. The group gained valuable insights that will be used for the rest of the meeting in the absence of IIEA.



Participation in the National Girl Summit to End Child Marriage : We joined our partner Joy for Children and the Girls Not Brides Alliance Uganda chapter for the 6th National Girls Summit to end child marriage that took place on the 30th of November 2023. The theme

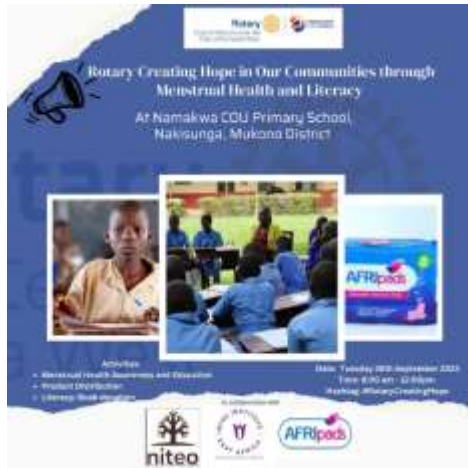
for this year is "A united society free from child marriage" and brought together several children, partners, ministries and the members of Girls Not Brides to reflect on their progress and plan for better partnerships. Different commitments were made by partners to end child marriage in line with their thematic areas. It is recommended that IIEA discuss ending child marriage during the menstrual health education sessions conducted in various communities. Below are pictures of the symposium.



Partnership with Rotary Club of Kampala

Irise Institute East Africa, in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Kampala and Mukono Central, Faraja Foundation, Niteo, and AFRIpads, organized a menstrual health and literacy education event at Namakwa Church of Uganda Primary School. The session brought together 150 girls of menstrual age, 100 adolescent boys aged between 9 and 17, 5 IIEA team members, 4 Faraja Africa Foundation representatives, 9 Rotaract Club members, and the school administrators. Although the students had already received some education on topics such as puberty, adolescence, menstruation, and sexual reproduction, they displayed a keen interest in delving deeper into these subjects.

Below are some pictures taken during the event with the pupils.



Participation in the Technical Review Meeting on Gender and Menstrual Health

On the 19th of December, we attended a technical review meeting on Gender and Menstrual Health organized by the Ministry of Education and Sports, Gender Equity and Budgeting Unit at Fairway Hotel. 2 team members participated from IIEA. It was also a quarterly review meeting to plan for 2024.

Below are images of the technical review meeting



Small Grants project 2024/25

Launch of the Period Equality Network Small Grants

On July 31st, with the support of the Waterloo Foundation, we launched the Period Equality Network Small Grants program in collaboration with Irise International at Hotel Africana from

Kampala Uganda, from 7:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., combining virtual and in-person attendance. The goal was to inform the Period Equality Network members to apply for small grants supporting menstrual health activities in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi. We had 42 physical attendees, including 30 network representatives, six IIEA staff members, and four government officials. Mr. Aggrey Kibenge, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, graced the event as the Guest of Honour, expressing gratitude for Irise International's impactful support in improving school attendance, educational attainment, and offering of employment in Uganda, especially in rural areas.



Stories of change

My name is Aaron Ngobi the head teacher of Namaganga Primary School in Busede sub-county, Butembe county, Jinja District, this is one of the most populated schools in Jinja District with a population of 2140 pupils with 28 teachers, I want to appreciate Irise Institute East Africa for the good work it has done in our school, the situation was very bad when they came with their period positive checklist, they found gaps in the school's hygiene, pit latrines, we had no hand washing facilities, among others.

- *The head teacher Butangala primary school madam Kirenda Milly, appreciated IIEA for the provision of menstrual products resulting in a high turn-up of females compared to male pupils this year 2023.*
- *The head teacher Nkondo primary Mr. Kulaba Richard shared their sustainability plan on going pad making as one way to engage and develop the learner's skills and to have what to use.*

Nangobi Cissy, a senior woman teacher Nkondo primary school

Irise Institute East Africa has improved confidence among the children since the model works in schools and community therefore, information is received from both sides compared to way back when menstruation was kept a secret and as a senior woman teacher, I would not talk freely and openly to the girls and no here I am freely interacting with girls and other people in the community.

Isabirye Juma community champion for Namaganga

"We are truly grateful to the IIEA for the amazing work they have been doing in our community. Their efforts have helped raise awareness about the importance of supporting girls who are menstruating. As a result, we have observed a positive shift in attitudes among parents and an increase in male involvement in menstruation-related issues. Men have become more concerned about this topic and have even tried to provide reusable pads. However, the cost of these pads is still too high for many people in our community."

Students voices for impact/change

Am Aidah Kauda, 13 years, in P6 at Namaganga Primary School because of BFSS I can now attend class when in my periods which was not the case before IIEA's intervention.

My name is Ketra Nankwanga, 14 years in P.6 at Namaganga primary school, I would like to appreciate the support rendered to me and my colleagues by the BFSS project and Irise Institute East Africa, I used to struggle with how to manage my periods, I live with a single mother and we are many children at home. My mum would find it hard to provide us with all the necessities including pads and as a result, she would advise us to use pieces of cloth which could cause discomfort and fear in me while on periods. Since I got my pads my life changed, I no longer worry about leaking.

Am Sharifah Kasumi 13 years in P.4 at Namaganga Primary, my interaction with Irise Institute East Africa has empowered my confidence during periods, I used to miss classes during periods because I thought it was shameful but also did not have pads. I can now freely attend class during periods.

Hello, I am Naomi Apolot, a 15-year-old primary six pupil at Kyomya Primary School. Unfortunately, pupils with disabilities are often segregated, but I am grateful to Irise Institute East Africa for considering and supporting us. The pads that you provide help us stay clean during menstruation, and the knowledge you share helps me guide my friends. I kindly request Irise to continue helping girls in my category so that they can continue with their education.

Hi there! My name is Peruth Kirabo and I'm ten years old, a primary two pupil at Bubugo Primary School. I'm incredibly grateful for the support and kindness shown to me by the Irise Institute East Africa. Since receiving scholastic materials, my academic performance has improved significantly, and I'm now one of the top students in my class. Additionally, my friends look up to me. Now that I have access to pads, I will never have to miss school because of my period again. Thank you so much for your help!

Hello, my name is Peace Namakula. I am 12 years old, in primary four at Bubugo Primary School. I used to feel lonely because am on ARVs, which is no more, am doing well in class. This positive change came after hearing messages from Irise staff about menstruation. They encouraged all girls to feel comfortable during menstruation, no matter their current situation or general condition. They explained that a better future can turn negative situations into positive ones. Thanks to Irise, I learned how to use a pad when I started my periods this year.