

## **Distributing Imperial Reusable Sanitary Pads And Awareness Creating On Menstrual Hygiene**

Caring Hands Of Hope continued to created awareness on menstrual hygiene management in 5 rural schools and distributed Imperial reusable sanitary towels to 250 girls in reproductive age.

The girls were further empowered to attend to menstruation without shame, ensuring they can experience their periods with dignity and fulfil their sexual and reproductive health and rights. The intervention is hoped to improve school attendance for girls and consequently reduce school dropout rates.

Nantale Rita, 13 from St Ambrose Ttamu Primary School is among the many beneficiaries on menstrual hygiene awareness activities. She also received reusable pads from Caring Hands Of Hope. Through these activities Nantale says she has learnt how to keep clean and encourages her peers to wash their hands after visiting the toilet. She also learnt how to use Imperial pads which keeps her in school even when she is in her periods.

“In the past, I would stay at home when I go into my periods. I used to use a cloth which would let blood through which made other pupils laugh at me at school. But now I got Imperial pads from Caring Hands Of Hope and learnt how to use them. I now regularly attend classes,” Nantale i noted. “I want to become a nurse when I grow up” she says of her vision for the future.

Caring Hands Of Hope provided technical assistance to teachers through mentorships on promotion of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) and sexuality education. The mentorships were premised on the fact that menstrual hygiene management is an important component of a “WASH-friendly school” and therefore an integral aspect of learning not only for teachers but also for the students. Teachers’ capacities were further built to manage aspects of providing students with basic information on puberty, menstruation, menstrual hygiene management, youth and gender friendly communication. Mentored teachers will be supported to cascade knowledge on menstrual hygiene management in schools through engaging school health clubs.

Because of the training they got from Caring Hands of Hope , Namuli Esther, Senior Woman Teacher, St Ambrose Ttamu Primary Schools revealed that they were about to form a school health club. The club does health talks on menstrual hygiene for both girls and boys including career guidance and counseling which she notes has reduced fear and improved school attendance for girls.

“Before Caring Hands Of Hope came to our school, girls used to miss school when they go their periods. Absenteeism among girls used to be high, they used to miss lessons which ultimately affected their performance,” Nakimuli says.

There was also high school dropout rate among girls because they used to be stigmatized by mostly boys because of going into menstruation according to the senior woman teacher.

Nakimuli, Senior Woman Teacher St Ambrose Ttamu Primary School engaging pupils on how to use reusable pad

“Girls who go in their periods have now learnt how to manage themselves which has reduced on dropout rates. In fact, there are more girls than boys in classes today,” Nakimuli.