



Uganda



The Kasiisi Project Girls' Program

The Kibale Forest Schools' Program 

The Kasiisi Project Girls Support Program has three main initiatives: keeping girls in school, informing them about their sexual health, and helping them become economically independent.

Launched in 2005, Not-for-profit , Menstrual Hygiene Management , Cross-sector , Cross-sector: Climate / Energy , Cross-sector: Education , Cross-sector: Health , Women's Empowerment , East Africa: Uganda



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Problem Addressed

In Uganda, drop-out rates are high for rural girls. Up to 80% of girls entering primary school will never complete their primary education. Uganda has the highest teen pregnancy rate in Sub-Saharan Africa with over 30% of Ugandan girls having their first baby by the time they are 18. HIV infection rates are 9 times higher in girls than in boys the same age. In addition Uganda has one of the highest maternal death rates in the world, 25% of which are from unsafe abortions. However, studies have shown that each additional year of education for girls reduces the risk of HIV infection by 7% and delays the first pregnancy by a year.

Innovative Approach

The program is innovative in its approach because it provides sensible and adequate access to clean water and sanitation conditions. This program in particular addresses key components of improving challenges and gaps in the WASH sector by changing the stigma around supporting these types of programs. Providing basic access of latrines and infrastructure to students is the first necessary step to building a stronger foundation for other innovative efforts.

Program Solution

The Kasiisi Project Girls Support Program has three main initiatives: keeping girls in school, informing them about their sexual health, and helping them become economically independent. This program specifically addresses these initiatives by supplying sanitary pads to girls who are menstruating, constructing private 'girls only' latrines, and providing accurate health information and mentorship through a female community health worker.

First, girls receive sanitary pads through the Kasiisi Project Girls Support Program. Previously, many girls would not attend school when they menstruated or would drop out of school completely. Today, Kasiisi Project is proud to announce that girls attendance has increased since 2006 when the distribution of sanitary pads began. Secondly, the Kasiisi Project Girls Support Program has built girl friendly latrines with washing facilities at 5 project primary schools. These latrines allow the girls the space and privacy to take care of feminine issues which used to keep them from attending school altogether. Lastly, the Kasiisi Project Girls Support Program hired a female Community Health Worker.

The Community Health Worker circulates between the primary schools, giving lessons on menstrual hygiene, sexually transmitted diseases, and strategies to avoid early pregnancy. The health worker, with the help of the Jane Goodall Institute (Uganda), also runs peer education workshops. These workshops train girls and female teachers to be mentors to other girls in their schools. They provide the peer educators with the proper tools and knowledge to be effective role models.

Early data show that the program has had a remarkable impact. Girls in schools with peer-educators are better informed about reproductive health and more comfortable with discussing issues around menstruation, puberty and relationships with boys. They now have 14 trained women teachers supporting 42 trained student-educators in 14 schools serving 5000 girls.