

# Ifage International

"advancing gender knowledge; **empowering communities**"

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Dear Friends and partners.

We are excited to share with you our 2nd Quarter (May-August 2024) newsletter update, reflecting a period of remarkable achievements, impactful activities, and inspiring collaborations. Despite the current situation in Kenya, marked by floods, femicide, and political unrest, we are still thriving. We deeply appreciate all our friends and partners who have stood with us through prayers and donations to support flood victims. Your support has been invaluable, and we continue to draw strength from our collective resilience and shared commitment to positive change.

Here is a deeper dive into what we have been up to and how you can continue to support our mission.

## Website Revamp: A New Chapter

We are thrilled to announce that our website has undergone a major transformation! Our refreshed site now offers a more user-friendly experience and richer content about our work and impact. If you haven't yet explored the new design, we invite you to visit our website and discover the latest updates. [IFAGE | Institute for Faith and Gender Empowerment \(ifageinternational.org\)](https://ifageinternational.org).

### MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY

On May 28th, World Menstrual Hygiene Day, we marked the occasion with two impactful events aimed at raising awareness and providing support for menstrual hygiene. Our efforts focused on addressing the significant challenges many face regarding menstrual health and hygiene, particularly in underserved areas.

As part of our follow-up activities with religious leaders after the Intersectional, See, Judge, and Act Tool (ISJA) training, we joined St. Peter's Nyamira Youth, a safe space that was created following an interdenominational dialogue where action plans were developed to address sexual and reproductive health (SRH) issues within faith communities. During this event, we distributed sanitary pads and innerwear, and engaged the youth in discussions about menstrual health, aiming to dismantle myths and promote a more supportive environment for menstrual hygiene management.



SRH health service provider explaining the process of menstruation



Youth posing for a photo after the session.

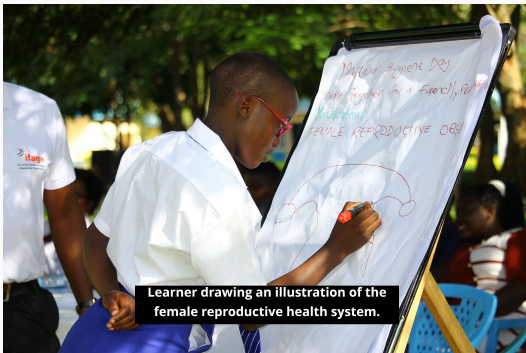


Religious leader distributing inner wears to youth

Additionally, we held a comprehensive session at Nyamira Girls Secondary School, which included students from Jaramogi High School, Bar-Kuogo Primary, and Nyamira Comprehensive School. This event provided an opportunity to educate and empower young girls about menstrual health. We distributed a total of 400 sanitary pads, and 150 innerwear to the needy learners and youth, ensuring they have the necessary resources to manage their menstrual health with dignity. The discussions emphasized the importance of menstrual hygiene, debunked myths, and encouraged the girls to openly talk about their menstrual health without shame.

Access to affordable menstrual products remains a significant challenge, 65% of girls and women cannot afford sanitary towels in Kenya. In Siaya County Region, many individuals struggle to afford sanitary towels and other menstrual hygiene products.

This scarcity not only affects health but also hinders educational and economic opportunities for women and girls.



To address this issue, we have launched a donation drive to collect sanitary pads and related products in schools and churches. Your support in this initiative will help ensure that those in need can manage their menstrual health with dignity. Donate now to support our sanitary pad drive and make a difference in the lives of many.

[Donate Now](#)

The role of religion in shaping societal attitudes towards menstruation cannot be overlooked. During our campaign, religious leaders shared perspectives from various faith traditions, contributing to a more inclusive dialogue about menstrual health. This approach is crucial for fostering supportive environments within faith communities and beyond.

## DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD

On 16<sup>th</sup> June 2024, during Day of the African Child, we commemorated The International Day of the African Child, bringing together learners from different schools, teachers, IFAGE's sponsored students, a representative from Ministry of Education ( MoE), and a representative from the Ministry of Health ( MoH). This year, we commemorated the day with 300 learners (boys and girls) from 4 different schools with the Theme: **“Education for all African children: time is now.”**

Celebrated with cultural dances, educational workshops, and motivational talks, this day highlighted both the progress made and the challenges that remain in ensuring quality education for all children and the need for educational reform and support for children across Kenya.



Joyful learners and IFAGE staff sharing a lighthearted moment



Learners performing a cultural dance during the celebration of Day of the African Child



learners lighting up the celebration with energetic dance moves.

IFAGE Beneficiaries played a significant role in providing support and words of encouragement to boys and girls in school, their involvement was instrumental in uplifting the spirits of children and providing them with hope for a brighter future. They shared their personal stories of overcoming challenges and emphasized the importance of education, resilience, and determination.

### Keep the Spike Alive

Every year, we get the opportunity to be together as board members and staff in a refreshing, and in an environment that not only connects us with each other but also with our inner self.

Our two-day (26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> June) retreat in Homabay County offered a unique opportunity for staff and board members to bond, reflect, and rejuvenate. By exploring historical sites, engaging in cultural heritage activities, and participating in self-reflection exercises, we deepened our connections and gained valuable insights that will drive our future growth. This experience highlighted the importance of unity, nature, and learning from our surroundings.



**IFAGE board members and staff posing for a group photo at Abundu hot spring.**



**IFAGE staff and board member posing at Lake Simbi Nyaima**

We are so grateful for support from our partner Imago Dei fund. Each year they give us opportunity to be together in a manner that keeps the fire burning as we explore meaning in team building and searching our inner self.

**Courtesy visit to Bondo and Rarieda Sub-County Health Management Team**

To effectively address teenage pregnancy, early marriage, and GBV, it is essential to collaborate with health management teams and service providers. This collaborative approach supports IFAGE's mission to integrate resources and efforts for impactful interventions. **On 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024**, IFAGE joined the Bondo Sub-County Health Management Team and Rarieda Sub-County Health Management Team respectively for a debrief meeting chaired by the Ministry of Health (MoH). We reviewed our Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) program, exploring partnership opportunities to reduce teenage pregnancy, early marriage, and GBV. This engagement

underscores IFAGE's commitment to leveraging partnerships and resources to drive meaningful change in SRHR service delivery.



IFAGE team and Sub-County Health Management Team having discussion to enhance youth-friendly services



## Celebrating International Youth Day: Bridging Digital and Faith-Based Solutions for SRHR.

On August 12th, IFAGE, in partnership with Ajira Digital, celebrated International Youth Day with the theme “From Click to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development.” This impactful event highlighted the intersection of digital technology and faith-based approaches in advancing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) for youth. The program featured a digital literacy workshop, an engaging panel discussion, and interactive sessions.



Ajira facilitator, facilitating a discussion digital literacy



Youth dancing during the celebration of youth day.

The panel, moderated by IFAGE's SRH Coordinator, included a religious leader, a reproductive health coordinator, and a digital facilitator. The religious leader emphasized the need for faith-based organizations to more actively engage in SRHR education, addressing challenges like cultural taboos and the importance of including SRH topics in church activities. The Sub-County reproductive health coordinator discussed gaps in SRHR services, such as myths and poor health-seeking behavior, and shared successful initiatives like youth-friendly services in health facilities. The Ajira facilitator highlighted the effectiveness of digital tools, including social media platforms, messaging apps, and educational resources, in advancing SRH advocacy. The event demonstrated the potential of combining digital and faith-based strategies to enhance SRH access and advocacy, underscoring the importance of collaboration and innovative approaches in supporting youth.



Youth posing for a photo after the session



Youth and religious leaders posing for a group photo

## Collaborations and External Engagements

Our commitment to collaboration and external engagement has been a cornerstone of our recent efforts. IFAGE staff have been actively involved in various initiatives, either through invitation by other organizations or through co-hosting events.

Nyaka Walk Against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) We were proud to participate in the Nyaka Walk Against SGBV, a significant event that brought together diverse stakeholders to raise awareness and advocate for the rights and protection of survivors. This walk, held in Rukungiri, Uganda, was a testament to the power of collective action in addressing SGBV.



IFAGE staff and Deborah of CBE international posing for a photo



Rev Domnic (IFAGECEO) and Mr. Jackson (Nyaka) posing for a photo after the walk



**Nyaka staff marching through Rukungiri town**

### **Addressing the needs of Youth and Adolescents in Siaya County**

The youth in Siaya County face significant health challenges, including inadequate access to sexual and reproductive health services, leading to high rates of teenage pregnancy, HIV, and GBV. Addressing these issues requires a coordinated and comprehensive approach. Addressing cases of teenage pregnancy, new HIV infection and SGBV in youth and adolescents is one of our key objectives under our SRH program.

Our staff attended a two-day collaborative meeting with the Siaya County Department of Health and Sanitation, Forum For African Women Educationalists (FAWE) - Kenya Chapter, The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, and other stakeholders. This meeting focused on developing a comprehensive plan to address pressing issues faced by young and adolescent people (AYP) in the county. Discussions covered establishing youth-friendly centers, enhancing sex education, addressing mental health and substance abuse, and leveraging digital platforms for engagement. This holistic approach aims to empower the youth and tackle the triple threat of HIV, GBV, and teenage pregnancy.

The gathering emphasized the importance of using data-driven, evidence-based interventions, and capacity-building for teachers to ensure the effectiveness of these initiatives. The implementation matrix discussed during the meeting will guide the county in achieving its goal of zero incidence of the triple threat among the youth population.



**A section of participants during the discussions**



**IFAGE staff with other participants during group discussions**



## Practical Measures in Preventing and Tackling Gender-Based Violence organised by World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) Women's Commission

Gender-based violence (GBV) and inequality persist in many communities due to deep-rooted patriarchal beliefs and the devaluation of women and girls. Religious leaders play a crucial role in shaping societal attitudes and can be powerful allies in the fight against GBV.

Consultation of the Regional Leaders of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) Women's Commission. Our Team Leader, Rev. Dominic, co-led a session on Practical Measures In Preventing and Tackling Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Rev. Dominic thrives on Egalitarian Theology and calls for system change and equality for men and women, working on ideas that promote human flourishing and a world where women and men are equal and free from GBV.

### Multi-stakeholders Forum on Ending Femicide and Other Forms of GBV in Kenya.

#### Stop Femicide in Kenya!

The rising cases of femicide and GBV in Kenya pose significant challenges to gender justice and equality. Addressing this issue requires a multi-stakeholder approach to challenge and dismantle the patriarchal structures that perpetuate violence against women and girls.

IFAGE staff members, including our Team Leader, attended a multi-stakeholder conference organized by Christian Aid Kenya and other partners. As a key panelist, our Team Leader highlighted the root causes of femicide and GBV, emphasizing the need for collective action to combat these issues. The conference provided a platform for discussing strategies to prevent femicide and promote gender justice across Kenya. Our involvement reinforces IFAGE's commitment to advocating for systemic changes that protect the rights and lives of women and girls.



Participants posing for a photo after the sessions.



IFAGE staff and Bishop Emily of Bondo Diocese posing for a photo

### Looking Ahead

As we reflect on our achievements over the past quarter, we are filled with gratitude for the unwavering support of our partners, friends, and community members. Your dedication and belief in our mission have been the driving force behind our efforts to create meaningful change. As we move forward, we are committed to continuing our work with renewed vigor and passion, addressing the pressing needs of our communities, and advocating for the rights and well-being of all. We invite you to stay engaged, join us in our upcoming activities, and continue to support our initiatives. Together, we can build a more just, equitable, and healthy future for everyone.

Thank you for being a part of this journey with us.

With gratitude,  
Rev Domnic Misolo and IFAGE Team



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