



PROJECT IMAGINE Kenya

The Uplifting Africa Program

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Photo Source: the [Project Imagine Organization Website](https://www.projectimagine.org/)

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Project Imagine: Nairobi, Kenya

Project Imagine is a non-profit Community-Based Organization (CBO) based in Nairobi, Kenya with a mission to ‘provide reliable access to sanitary products and menstrual hygiene education,’ for young women in school. This mission is rooted in the fact that girls will miss approximately 20% of school days due to a lack of access to sanitary products. Beyond the sanitary napkin provision in schools for young women, Project Imagine also educates young women in secondary schools on; the science behind the menstrual cycle, appropriate techniques to rid of sanitary napkins, how to clean your body during the menstrual cycle, while simultaneously mentoring and empowering these girls. The unspoken and taboo nature of the menstrual cycle that often comes with patriarchal dominated cultures is toxic as it leads to higher rates of young women dropping out of school and higher rates of sexual assault in young women. Project Imagine works to combat this.

I had the privilege of working with the Project Imagine group as an extracurricular at the International School of Kenya, whereby our group of nearly 30 students went on a biweekly trip to a school outside of Nairobi. Once there, we went into rooms with the students and through group ice breakers, short songs and dances, role-playing common situations, posters for their classroom, and one on one mentorship conversations, we connected with these girls. Beyond the demonstration of the uses of sanitary napkins regarding how and when to change and dispose of them, we had conversations of female empowerment and stressed the idea that “your body is your body, if a man or a boy tries to touch you, you say no.” The main idea we linked everything back to was the value of education. Rather than conceptualizing education as a chore as many middle school-aged kids do, we had conversations to re-configure education as a privilege to

learn about the world around you, make friends, and a necessary tool to provide opportunities for the future.

Pictured on the left in the image below: Rose from Swani Primary School

Pictured on the right in the image below: Ivonne from Swani Primary School



Photo Source: the [Project Imagine Organization Website](#)

Ivonne and Rose, young women who attend one of the school's Project Imagine supplies with sanitary napkins, spoke on their opinions of the CBO. The Project Imagine website shares, 'Ivonne said that because they now receive the pads on a monthly basis, they are "more comfortable" in school; Rose added that with better access to sanitary pads, they can now "have a chance to concentrate [on] our learning" and don't miss school due to their period. When asked

what Project Imagine meant to them, they said PI has become “a savior” and “a helper” as they learn and grow. Ivonne said that Project Imagine has “a heart of helping” and Rose said that her “prayer is that Project Imagine can continue.” Personally, I acknowledge that I did not understand the extent to which I was taking sanitary napkins and menstrual cycle education for granted, or the negative effects it would have on my life if I did not have this. I am not the only one who praises the efforts of Project Imagine, as the CBO was recognized in 2019 with a Princess Diana Award. This highly competitive and prestigious award based in London recognizes humanitarian work in youth who ‘work to improve the lives of others.’

Project Imagine continues to promote education in young women by providing them with the tools and mentorship to empower them to stay in school and to be confident in all endeavors. I was intrigued and inspired by Project Imagine’s mission when I first came across the group and wanted to shed light on this Nairobi based group and all the good they are doing.

