



Huru International





Huru International Background

Huru was established in 2008 by Lorna Macleod, Executive Director of AmericaShare, to ensure that all girls have the opportunity to stay in school and healthy. Huru began working in Kenya, where the Ministry of Education estimates that 868,000 girls miss an average of four school days each month because they cannot afford sanitary pads. This puts girls at a severe disadvantage as they fall behind, repeat grades, and eventually drop out of school. Failure to obtain a basic education dramatically increases vulnerability to disease and long-term poverty.

Huru started by developing a durable low-cost, and locally produced reusable sanitary pad, to be bundled into kits along with other resources for safe and sustainable menstrual care, along with life-saving HIV/AIDS prevention information. Kits are delivered through peer-led educational workshops, which engage beneficiaries in discussions and activities focused on HIV prevention, health and hygiene, education, and other topics relevant to at-risk girls. Ultimately, Huru's program model is designed to empower girls by enabling them to take advantage of educational opportunities, gain qualifications for adult jobs, educate others, and pursue their dreams.

Huru was launched with support from Johnson & Johnson, Micato Safaris, and the Elton John AIDS Foundation. Having demonstrated the effectiveness of the program, Huru has earned the support of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), USAID, the Safaricom Foundation, the Peace Corps, and many others. In 2012, Huru will launch a scale up program in Kenya that will reach more than 60,000 youth, and a pilot program in Tanzania.



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Key Objectives

- Reduce school absenteeism by providing girls with essential sanitary products.
- Increase beneficiary access to HIV prevention and sexual and reproductive health information and resources.
- Economically empower communities through local production.



Huru International Program Features

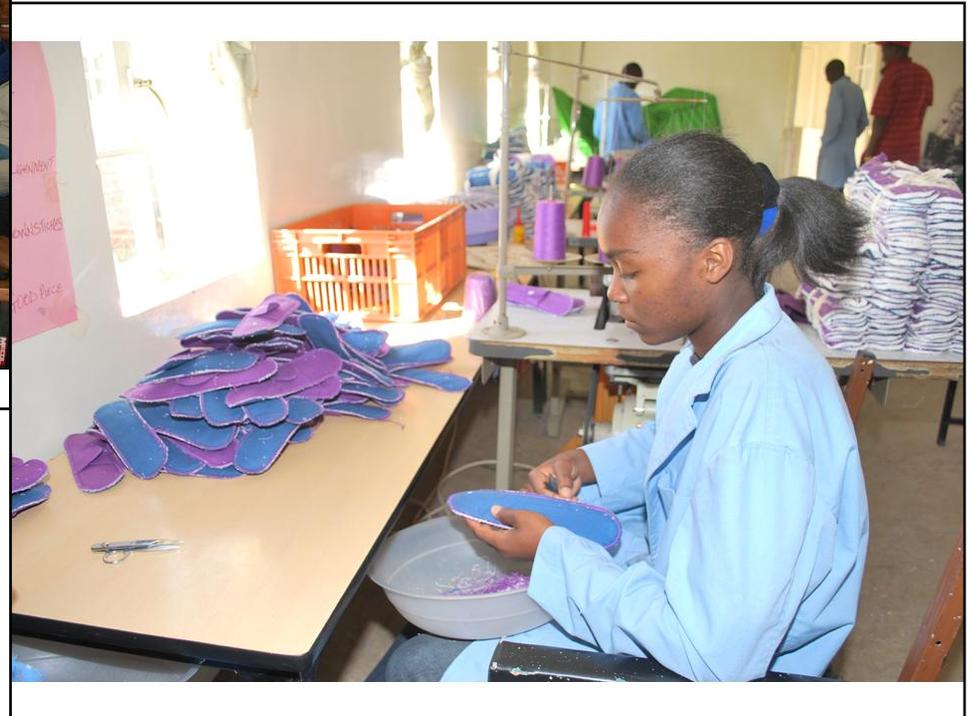
- Huru Kits are distributed through peer-led educational workshops, which reach at-risk girls through their schools.
- Distribution workshops are built around interactive training sessions that focus on HIV prevention, key elements of sexual and reproductive health, and menstrual health and hygiene.
- Huru coordinates with local school personnel and community-based organizations (CBOs) to ensure that project resources are reaching the girls most in need of them.
- Distributions are carried out directly by Huru and through partner CBOs operating in target districts, which enables Huru to efficiently reach beneficiaries throughout Kenya.
- Implementing partners have also distributed Huru Kits in programs serving diverse populations, including out-of-school girls, orphanages, and female prison populations.



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Inside Huru's Mukuru-based production workshop.



The workshop currently provides full-time employment for more than 20 local women and men.



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Each Huru Kit includes:

- Eight reusable sanitary pads
- Three pairs of underwear
- Detergent-grade soap
- A waterproof storage bag
- Educational materials focused on HIV prevention
- Detailed instructions on proper pad use and maintenance



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Measures of Success

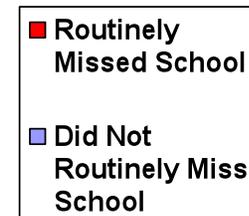
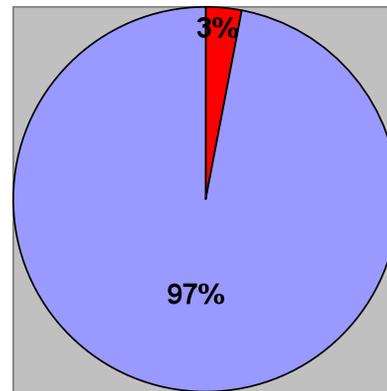
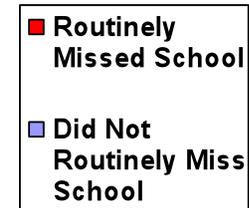
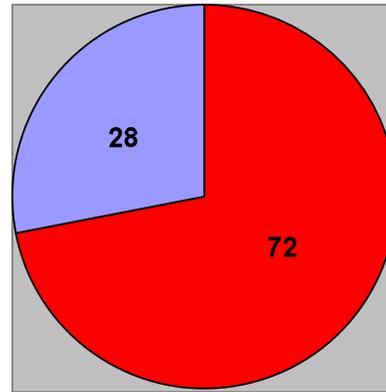
- 20,000 Huru Kits have been distributed to date
- Absenteeism has been eliminated among 95% of beneficiaries
- On target to distribute more than 60,000 Huru Kits in 2012





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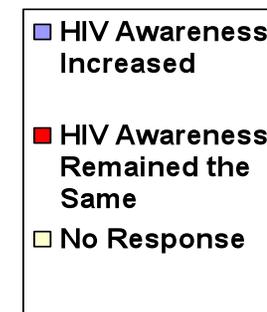
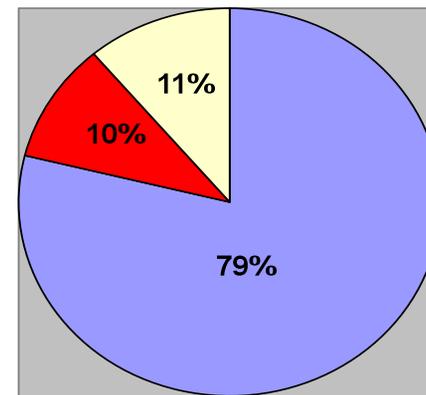
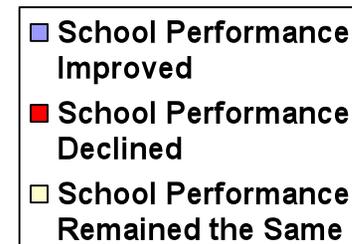
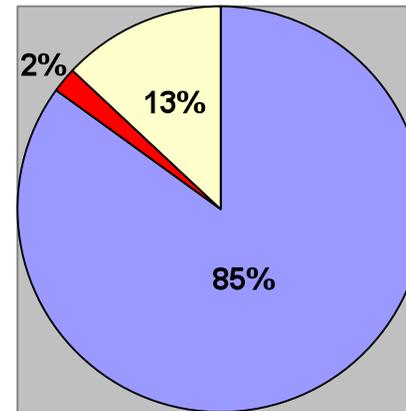
- Menstruation-related absenteeism among beneficiaries BEFORE distribution
- Menstruation-related absenteeism among beneficiaries one year AFTER distribution





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- Changes in school performance among beneficiaries one year after receiving a Huru Kit
- Changes in level of HIV awareness among beneficiaries one year after receiving a Huru Kit





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Huru and the Millennium Development Goals

“Study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls and the empowerment of women. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity ... and promote health—including the prevention of HIV/AIDS. No other policy is as powerful in increasing the chances of education for the next generation.”

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan

The empowerment of girls and women is a precondition to the realization of the MDGs as a whole, and this is the core principle on which Huru was established. Huru’s operational philosophy is that removing obstacles to the education of girls—through an innovative and cost-effective intervention—creates the conditions in which positive, long-term change is possible.

Huru’s program model employs a holistic approach that cuts across several critical MDGs, with a particular focus on the second, third and sixth Millennium Development Goals.



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Huru and the Millennium Development Goals

MDG 2—Achieve Universal Primary Education, and MDG 3—Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Significant gains have been made toward achieving MDG 2 over the past decade, but progress has stalled in recent years, and Sub-Saharan Africa continues to lag behind all other developing regions, accounting for 48% of all out-of-school children globally. Just as importantly, primary completion rates remain low, particularly among girls: beginning with the onset of menstruation, there is a significant drop-off in female enrolment. Chronic absenteeism is among the leading causes, as girls who fall behind in their work are forced to repeat grades, which makes them far likelier to leave school altogether.

Eliminating chronic absenteeism among girls is one of the most direct and effective ways of improving performance, preventing early withdrawal, and reducing gender disparities in education. As Oxford University professor Linda Scott noted, programs that include sanitary pad provision have the potential to “offer a faster, more direct, and less expensive means of raising school attendance and academic performance among girls than is seen from the more common community engagement programs.”



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Huru and the Millennium Development Goals

MDG 6—Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases

In Kenya, youth are among the groups most severely affected by HIV/AIDS: persons between the ages of 15 and 24 account for 40% of all new HIV infections each year. Within this age group, HIV prevalence is four times higher among females than males, and lack of education is one of the major reasons that girls and young women are so particularly vulnerable to HIV.

Huru's core mission is to keep girls in school as a means of reducing their HIV vulnerability. As noted by UNICEF, "education is likely to determine a person's vulnerability to HIV infection," and girls who stay in school have a higher level of HIV prevention knowledge and become sexually active at a later age. In addition to the practical impact that prolonged schooling has on the HIV vulnerability of adolescent girls, Huru's educational outreach activities help to ensure that all girls have the knowledge they need to protect themselves.



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Huru Kit Distribution in
Naivasha, Kenya (Left)



Small group session with Peer
Educator in Ooloolua, Kenya (Right)

