

ENA MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MAY 2023 ISSUE



MAKING MENSTRUATION A NORMAL FACT OF LIFE

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Word from the Group CEO

Making Menstruation a Normal Fact of Life



Dr. Jennifer N. Riria

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Patron DTF

This month, Echo Network Africa joined the world in celebrating Menstrual Hygiene Day. Menstrual hygiene is vital to the empowerment and well-being of girls and women worldwide. It is not just about access to sanitary towels but also ensuring that girls and women live in an environment that values and supports their ability to manage their menstruation with dignity.

This year's theme '**Making Menstruation a Normal Fact of Life by 2030**' highlighted the urgency for the collective work needed to change the negative social norms surrounding menstruation.

Unfortunately, menstruation is still surrounded by stigmas, taboos, and misinformation in many societies. These harmful beliefs often lead to shame, exclusion, and limited opportunities for girls and women during their menstrual cycles. To achieve our goal of normalizing menstruation it is crucial to work collectively to challenge these negative social norms and promote open conversations about menstruation.

At Echo Network Africa through the Girls Excel Initiative, we promote menstrual health education and awareness as an integral part of breaking the silence and dispelling myths around menstruation. By providing accurate information, we can empower girls and women to make informed decisions about their menstrual hygiene needs and rights.

“ **Menstrual hygiene is vital to the empowerment and well-being of girls and women worldwide. It is not just about access to sanitary towels but also ensuring that girls and women live in an environment that values and supports their ability to manage their menstruation with dignity.** ”

NEWS



Listen to the pain of Kenyans and hold the Finance Bill - Echo Network Africa's Group CEO, Dr Jennifer Riria (c), presents the Women's Memorandum to the Parliamentary Committee on Finance and Planning during the last session of the public hearing held at the Garden Inn Hotel, Nairobi. ENA pleaded with the Members of Parliament to find alternative ways of raising government revenue rather than impose heavier taxes on an already choked citizenry. Dr. Riria was accompanied by ENA's Legal Officer Ms. Anastacia Kimaku (L) and Strategy and Political Advisor Ms. Sarah Muhoya (R).

(Programme Highlights)

ENA Transforming Lives of Women in Marsabit County

Community Resilience and Livelihood

Naitutum-Ngai Community Based Organization (CBO) embarked on a remarkable journey of empowerment in June 2013 as a self-help group comprising of individuals engaged in table banking, beads selling, and honey business. Recognizing the potential of this resilient group, Echo Network Africa (ENA) joined forces with them, bringing forth a transformative impact that would reshape their lives. Through ENA's guidance, the CBO received comprehensive training in group dynamics, financial literacy, capacity building, and business development, setting the stage for their extraordinary growth and success.

Collaborating with the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI), ENA facilitated market linkages for Naitutum-Ngai CBO, exposing them to new opportunities in outside catering and honey packaging.



ENA empowers women with business skills to help them diversify their income revenue. Madam Jacinta from Naitutum Women Group pictured, showcases their bakery which they use to make bread and doughnuts and their kitchen garden.

As a result, the group expanded their horizons, unlocking untapped potential in these areas. This growth led to the official registration of Naitutum-Ngai CBO as a Community Based Organization in April 2021, marking a significant milestone in their journey.

Driven by their success, Naitutum-Ngai CBO has taken on a new mission to empower and uplift other women groups in Wamba. Currently, they are actively training 12 women groups on table banking, FGM, women's rights, and group dynamics.

These women groups include Naitubulu Self Help Group, Twiga Mamas Self Help Group, Nalojik Self Help Group, Naramat Women Group, Lmarti Self-Help Group, Naitajeu Self-Help Group, Lkilikwai Self Help Group, Nagwari Beekeepers, Omom Nasham Youth Group, Ecde Welfare, Nashipae Women Group, Samaletu Women Group, and Naitajeu Self-Help Group, which holds a special place as it comprises members living with HIV.

Currently engaged in diverse ventures, including table banking, honey business, beadwork, outside catering, tent hire, and training facilitation, Naitutum-Ngai CBO stands as a testament to the transformative power of ENA's support. As they continue to evolve and create a lasting impact, Naitutum-Ngai CBO is a beacon of hope, embodying the true spirit of empowerment and community development.

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DTF Mashinani – Strengthening Women's Leadership at the Grassroot Level

Women's Leadership, Political Participation and Governance

Echo Network Africa (ENA) has recently launched 'DTF Mashinani,' a ground-breaking initiative focused on mobilizing women leaders at the grassroots level to enhance their leadership abilities and address local issues more effectively. This initiative also provides a platform for women politicians to kickstart their journey towards the 2027 General Elections.

On 19 May 2023, during a remarkable multi-sectoral & Trailblazers meeting, women leaders from Machakos, Kitui, and Makueni counties in the lower Eastern region gathered to commemorate the launch of DTF Mashinani. This meeting, hosted by ENA in collaboration with Democracy Trust Fund (DTF) and with the support of Hanns with Seidel Foundation (HSF), marked a significant milestone in advancing women's participation in leadership roles.

Ms. Sarah Muhoya, ENA's Head of Women Leadership, Political Participation, and Governance, and the National Coordinator of Democracy Trust Fund, emphasized the importance of seeking women leaders from diverse sectors, including churches, chamas, marketplaces, farms, boards, communities, learning institutions, and trade unions. She encouraged the women to adopt a mindset of becoming solution providers, emphasizing the value of learning from those who are already making a difference.

Damaris Kariuki, the Lead for Gender Portfolio for Kenya and Ethiopia at HSF, highlighted the importance of recognizing that every aspect of women's lives is political or influenced by politics, regardless of whether they choose to participate in electoral politics.



ENAs 'DTF Mashinani' launch attracts women leaders from Machakos, Kitui, and Makueni Counties in the lower Eastern region to enhance their leadership abilities and address local issues more effectively.

Additionally, Grace Kioko, a 2022 Aspirant and DTF member, shared that unsuccessful candidates from the 2022 elections, who now have their sights set on the 2027 elections, have regrouped and initiated "Bunge la wanawake mashinani." Kioko expressed the need for ENA, DTF and HSF to support and empower this initiative called Bunge la Wanawake.

The launch of DTF Mashinani and the collaborative efforts between ENA, DTF, and HSF are undoubtedly instrumental in advancing the representation and leadership of women in Kenya. We are excited to witness the positive impact this initiative will have on creating a more inclusive and equitable political landscape for women in the country.

DTF Mashinani is a ground-breaking initiative focused on mobilizing women leaders at the grassroots level to enhance their leadership abilities and address local issues more effectively.

Celebrating World Menstrual Hygiene Day 2023

Girls Excel Initiative

In 2018, ENA through the Girls Excel initiative set out to address the twin problems of teenage pregnancies and poor performance in Mathematics and Sciences subjects among girls in schools. Through a rapid survey to establish the status of uptake, retention and performance in STEM subjects as well as the rate of teenage pregnancies, the initiative identified Kithangari Girls Secondary School as the pilot for the initiative.

The initiative also evolved over the years to be ENA's second incubation: To catalyze acceptance and commitment by communities to eradicate Female Genital Mutilation, Period Poverty, Teenage Pregnancies, and Early Marriages through accelerating the performance and uptake of STEM subjects among girls. Additionally, ENA has been instrumental in establishing Hesabu clubs in schools.

These clubs have served as a platform for girls to engage in weekly discussions focused on STEM subjects.

This month, ENA joined the world in celebrating Menstrual Hygiene Day on 28th May 2023 with the theme - 'Making Menstruation a normal fact of Life by 2030.' ENA organized a menstrual hygiene management talk, and distributed menstrual hygiene management materials, to 500 students in Kithangari Girls Secondary School. Each girl received three packets of sanitary towels and three cakes of soap.

The event was successfully spearheaded by our local implementing partner, Youth and Women Advocacy Network (YWAN). YWAN specializes in implementing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights interventions for young people. Our collaboration with them aligns with ENAs strategy to be a catalyst for development, prioritizing the involvement of local organizations that deeply understand the challenges faced by community members. We are proud of the progress achieved so far and are committed to amplifying our efforts in empowering girls and normalizing menstruation.



Echo Network Africa donated Menstrual Hygiene Materials to students of Kithangari Girls Secondary School on Menstrual Hygiene Day. The students were also taken through a Menstrual Hygiene Management presentation by ENAs Local Implementing Partner (LIP), Youth and Women Advocacy Network.



Vice President of Zimbabwe, H.E Constantino Chiwenga, poses with delegates following a successful AWLN High-Level Intergenerational Dialogue on Women's Political Participation in Harare, Zimbabwe. ENAs Ms. Sarah Muhoya - Head of Women's Leadership, Political Participation & Governance at ENA represented Dr. Riria, Chairperson AWLN Kenya Chapter and GCEO ENA.

AWLN Increasing Women's Participation in decision-making Processes

Special Projects

The African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) High-Level Intergenerational Dialogue on Women's Political Participation took place in Harare, Zimbabwe, bringing together women from the region, with over 300 participants and representatives from various countries among them Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi, and Seychelles. This two-day gathering, held on the 15th and 16th of May 2023, was inaugurated by Vice President H.E Dr. rtd. General C. Chiwenga, and aimed to achieve the objective to:

- Discuss the current status of women's political leadership in Zimbabwe.
- Share international and regional experiences in promoting women's political participation and
- Identify strategies and best practices for enhancing women's political engagement.

During the event, participants shared personal accounts of their experiences in political involvement and highlighted areas for learning and improvement. One notable innovation that received praise was Echo Network Africa's

Democracy Trust Fund (DTF) model from Kenya, which was seen as a powerful tool to be replicated in other African countries. This model effectively drives women's economic empowerment and addresses gender inequalities in leadership.

Furthermore, there was a unanimous agreement that women in politics require investment throughout the entire electoral cycle. It was emphasized that grassroots engagement and partnerships with women in business are essential to support and empower women in politics.

Financial literacy, capacity building in fundraising and resource management, and the creation of more platforms for discussions involving women in key sectors were identified as crucial investments. These efforts aim to foster networking opportunities and a broader agenda focused on financing women in politics.

The dialogue was a significant step forward in promoting women's political participation, and the insights and outcomes will serve as a foundation for future endeavors in Zimbabwe and beyond.

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Visitors of ENA



Echo Network Africa's GCEO Dr. Jennifer Riria (third from right) poses with the Nigerian Delegation after holding talks with them on possibilities of collaboration and catalyzing ENAs initiatives in Nigeria.

ENA DADA PACK



Did you know?

1. That lack of pads drives 1 in 10 girls aged 15-19 to 'sex for pads'
2. A girl misses 4 days of school per month due to lack of sanitary towels which is associated with shame and stigma?

By donating Ksh. 650 you can help a girl get an ENA Dada Pack and keep her in school for a whole year.

The ENA Dada Pack Contains:

12 packets of Sanitary Towels

2 Panties

3 Cakes of Soap

Donate Ksh 1000

Through

Mpesa
Paybill

>>

972800 >>

Account:
Dada Pack

ENA's presence in Nakuru City

TO LET



The Jennifer Riria Hub is an ultra-modern, state of the art facility developed by Echo Network Africa (ENA). Located at the junction of Tom Mboya and Kipchoge Keino road in Nakuru City. The Hub has 108 shops and 184 parking slots making it the perfect and hustle free place for shopping, business, indoor and outdoor events.

ANCHOR TENANT SPACE AVAILABLE

15,700.05 Sqft
(GROUND FLOOR)
&
7,640.29 Sqft
(UPPER GROUND FLOOR)

OTHER SPACES AVAILABLE

Offices, Banking Hall,
Food Court- Restaurants,
Speciality Stores, etc.

KEY FEATURES

24 hrs CCTV security system, Ample parking, Standby generator, Sufficient water supply, Lift access to all floors, Easy access & exit Ample toilet facilities, Good access roads

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