



## **Bana Research Executive Summary**

Bana manufactures affordable, eco-friendly sanitary pads to keep girls in school and create local jobs in rural Uganda. In addition to providing girls and young women in rural Uganda with affordable access to sanitary pads, Bana also hosts menstrual health education and business skills workshops at local schools and women's groups. Select women from the women's groups become saleswomen, Champions, and keep a percentage of the revenue from the selling of pads. Through this model Bana has been able to impact over 50,000 women in three districts.

To expand its impact, Bana seeks more investment and documentation of their theory of change. Therefore, for our research project we spent 8 weeks living, working, traveling, and conducting research with Bana and its extensive network, engaging in participant observation, conducting interviews, and creating ethnographic field notes. The observations were done at two primary schools and five secondary schools where we were able to observe Bana staff interact with over 150 school girls. In addition, we conducted observations at five community meeting places, one health clinic, one Bana collection center, and repeatedly at Bana headquarters. The interview guide -- created collaboratively with the Bana team -- included questions pertaining to the impact that the enterprise has had on personal lives and the communities, as well as suggestions for improvement of Bana services and products. We conducted a total of 28 group and individual interviews with Champions, users, parents of users, teachers, and health clinic workers, all of whom are grateful for Bana.

Through all the research we were able to witness Bana's theory of change manifested in the life and work of this enterprise. Bana sensitizes the community to the importance of menstrual health in nuanced ways by building relationships with village elders and influencers. Champions and Staff then go on to educate the community on proper menstrual management and hygiene. Finally, Champions and staff operate the enterprise by manufacturing the Banapads to selling the Banapads. This theory of change disrupts the existing ways in which menstruation is discussed in rural Uganda. Instead of stigmatizing menstruation Bana talks about it directly through education, and gets the community to talk about it through sensitization, thus disrupting the social equilibrium that exists around menstruation. We wrote a theory of change profile that provides a narrative and detailed explanation of this, and is titled "Disruption: How Bana Creates and Supports Networks for Women-Positive Sustainable Development in Rural East Africa."

Additionally, we developed a Monitoring and Evaluation tool for the health impact of Banapads. The tool provides Bana with quantitative and qualitative methods for examining the relationship between sales and services data and incidents of acute infections and conditions related to menstruation. This will help Bana further understand the relationship between their community-focused health and menstruation trainings and the self-managing and treatment seeking of women and girls in those communities.

Bana's disruption of the social equilibrium around menstruation allows the enterprise to impact lives on a much deeper level than traditional for profit companies and NGOs. Everyone directly impacted and influenced by Bana becomes an agent for change in their own communities, not just for menstruation, but for other important issues including health and education. Thus, the social change that Bana is delivering is doing more than providing affordable sanitary pads to schoolgirls; it is also building capacity for the sustainable growth of rural Uganda through disruption of the stigma surrounding menstruation.