

NEWS LETTER
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“My life changed a lot because of pregnancy. I got pregnant and gave birth in the first lockdown. My parents chased me from home and I started staying with the father of the baby, mistreating me very much. It was so difficult, ...life was very hard. Thanks to JMERC, now I can express myself, I am now strong, I can now face tomorrow with courage” (*Teenage Mother*)

Our Brand Promise & Attributes

“Because the Youth are the Hope for Future”

Anchoring on the holistic model of enabling the youth to courageously embrace the future and their present situations and providing educational, psychosocial support to schools, families and communities, we have set up running programs in teachers professional development and special youth-tailored programs such as life skills, Social and Emotional Skills (SES), Sexual and Reproductive and Health Rights (SRHR), Employability Skills and Entrepreneurship skills. Through these programmes, we aim at ensuring that youth especially girls, grasp greater opportunities to learn and earn, passing on the value of education to their own families and communities, thereby enabling better prospects for each successive generation.

We are guided by and aim at,

- ❖ *Equity* – Inclusive in all our programmes ensuring that all children and youth especially the systemically marginalised not only attend school but also achieve the intended learning outcomes.
- ❖ *Honesty* – dependable and accountable to the youth and consistent to delivering our promise to the youth.
- ❖ *Passion* – illuminating zeal and audacity for success among the most marginalised youth.
- ❖ *Openness* – driven by data, evidence and the voice of the youth whom we serve.
- ❖ *Creativity* – Nurturing creative minds to navigate, appreciate and seize the 21st century opportunities.

❖ Journeying with the Vulnerable Adolescent Girls amidst the Covid-19 Pandemic

Covid-19 pandemic has paralysed education for most children and youth globally. While the pandemic has affected boys and girls, adolescent girls are the most affected with diminishing hope of returning to school. With many families falling into poverty and reducing ability to finance even some of the essential needs, adolescent girls are the most affected – majority from poor families failing to afford menstrual hygiene products – further compromising their Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH).

JMERC strives to generate creative and effective strategies that can enable adolescent girls navigate through the challenging times of Covid-19 pandemic. Besides the training workshops on SES and SRH, JMERC believes that girls require creative and entrepreneurship skills to provide some of their essential needs. For this reason, we supported Mpumudde Seed School with five (5) sewing machines and other materials to make Menstrual Hygiene Products. 300 students thereof are now trained in making reusable sanitary pads for their own use and sale to acquire other essential goods.



Students are making reusable sanitary pads at School.

For ecological and systemic positive change towards the support for girls' SRH, boys are encouraged to participate in the making of Menstrual Hygiene Products



JMERC Programmes Director, **Ms Jean Mary Wendo** (Standing) facilitating a mentorship session to a group of girls on Social and Emotional Skills

❖ Girls discuss Social and Emotional Skills (SES) and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)



Adolescent girls discuss the Social and emotional Skills (SES) they need for their own Sexual and Reproductive Health

We take pride in our identity as a Youth-focused Education Initiative.

Two years of persistent and focused efforts of holistic and youth-led programmes, JMERC continues to offer hope for the future and enhancing resilience among the most vulnerable and marginalised adolescent girls in Uganda.



A girl presenting to the colleagues after a brainstorming session on SES and SRH

“Genuinely listening to the adolescent girls is the surest means of reaching their heart - They need a safe and supportive space to discuss what affects them” Dr John Mary Vianney Mitana, (JMERC, ED)

❖ JMERC launches a Youth-Blog – The first of its kind in Uganda

Youth are going through unprecedented period in which it is difficult to access critical educational and sexual and reproductive health information due to the movement restrictions brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Besides its effects on education, Covid-19 has compounded cases of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), unplanned pregnancies and early/forced marriages. With the closure of schools and restricted movements, the affected adolescent girls have limited access to useful and relevant information

“At the end of September 2021, JMERC launches an Interactive Blog as a Virtual Hub for relevant, timely and youth-focused information about Sexual and Reproductive Health, Social and Emotional Skills and Life skills”



What do the Girls say?

Of every 10 girls interviewed, six admitted in serious need of key Social-Emotional skills for better Sexual and Reproductive Health. The key SES mentioned include: Self-image and self-concept, decision making, self-awareness and Negotiation skills.

Peer learning and mentorship were among the key avenues girls said could help them.



A girl presenting the views of her colleagues during a participatory learning workshop

With funding from CODE's Context Matters Research Grant program, www.code.ngo <https://code.ngo/approach/research-initiatives/>. JMERC is concluding a participatory Action Research project with the Adolescent Girls. Preliminary results indicate:

- Pregnancy and early marriage are the primary drivers of girls dropout from school during and most likely the post Covid-19 pandemic.
- Pregnancy and early marriage are a symptom of economic vulnerabilities compounded by limited knowledge of Sexual and Reproductive and Health Rights (SRHR), and life skills.
- More adolescent girls and young women are more likely to drop out of school than boys and young men of the same age and social economic background.
- In addition to training and mentorship in SES and SRH, the most vulnerable girls require supplies of essential menstrual health products, especially during the hard time of Covid-19 pandemic.

Girls and Women need the support and understanding of boys and men for their social and emotional wellbeing and Sexual and Reproductive Health.



JMERC Executive Director, Dr John Mary Vianney Mitana, facilitating a learning workshop with Secondary School boys, about SES and SRH.



Other JMERC Programmatic activities

For holistic learning of the youth, JMERC believes in an ecological and systemic approach in which all stakeholders are engaged and involved.

The teacher is key to the learning and achievement of students. For this reason JMERC prioritises teachers' professional learning, engagement and development.



A teacher presenting in a plenary during a learning workshop on formative assessment - 2019

Other programmes include:

- Critical Pedagogy for Teachers
- Teaching Beyond the Technique
- Gender Sensitive Pedagogy
- School Leadership, Management and Culture
- Learning Assessment
- Educative role of parents.
- Educational Research
- More other tailored programmes



JMERC ED, facilitating a teachers learning session



A participant/ Teacher explains a Test Blue print to the plenary during a teachers learning session