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Special points of interest:

- Launch Conference Highlights
- Interim Management Committee
- HERS-EA Incorporated
- Grant Applications & Status
- Community Links
- Opportunity for publication
- Collaborations & Partnerships

HERS-EA is launched.....

We warmly welcome you to the first HERS-EA newsletter! It is seven months since HERS-EA was launched at the Imperial Royale Hotel in Kampala, amidst ululations; with over 150 women and representatives of several institutions in attendance.

A comprehensive Launch Report which was circulated a few weeks later. There was much buzz and one could almost touch the energy and hopes that were bouncing around amongst the participants. One of the 'action points' that were articulated by the Vice Chair and reinforced by the Chair was 'to keep in touch'. We continue to 'feel the fear' but we will 'do it anyway'.



Above: Ululations at the Launch, led by Prof Wakoko-Studstill, Chair of the Conference Committee.

Below: Prof Kabasa with Prof Khaitisa (in red), Founder HERS-EA and Ms Naomi Lumutenga, vice chair.



Achievements since the Launch:

HERS-EA is incorporated!

In September 2014 HERS-EA was incorporated under the Uganda government Companies Act and it is now a legal entity able to transact its own business.

Office Space

HERS-EA is currently engaged in negotiations with Makerere University administration (HERS-EA hosts) for possible office space but the premises, if obtained, will require a lot of refurbishment. Watch this space.....

The interim management committee

HERS-EA continues to be run by volunteers. In order to enable on-going functionality an **interim committee** was set up to see HERS-EA through its inception phase. The committee comprises:



Associate Professor
Ruth Muwazi - **Chair**
HERS-EA and
HERS alum (South
Africa)



Dr Irene Naigaga
BVM, MSc, Ph. D—
Secretary



Ms Naomi Lumutenga—
BA, MA, Dip Ed—
Treasurer



Ms Loyce Hamba B Com
Administrator

Grant applications & status...

Title	Funder	Objective	Status
Women Empowering Women (WEW) in Entrepreneurship Skills and Support in Eastern Uganda	Mississippi State University: International Institute	To empower rural women in entrepreneurial skills to produce and market low cost, hygienic, re-usable sanitary pads in their communities	Awarded; being implemented
Putting Women and Girls at the Centre of Development: a new Grand Challenge	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	To empower marginalised women and girls through alternative education and home based entrepreneurship so that they can engage in decisions relating to their own and their families' livelihoods.	Awaiting feedback on the Letter of Inquiry, by April 2015
Development of Africa-US Higher Education Leadership Partnership/ Program (HELP) for Women in East Africa	Carnegie Corporation of New York	To cover start-up costs of HERS-EA	To be submitted by the end of March 2015

Community Links Formed

HERS-EA interim executive committee has been engaging with women in rural areas. This approach is driven by the philosophy that a ‘supply chain’ of girls needs to be developed through retention in mainstream education and improvement in performance. Menstruation management is one of the reasons identified for girls’ high school drop-out rate as a result of lack of sanitary pads and facilities in their schools.

HERS-EA has partnered with AVS to support a group of women in Bulambuli District in Eastern Uganda who are making affordable re-usable sanitary pads. A small grant has been obtained through MSU to develop this project which will serve several purposes that are of interest to HERS-EA; the project will provide sanitary pads to help keep girls in education, an income for the women who make the product, teach the women transformative business skills and build self-esteem for the women and their daughters. The women in Bulambuli will become trainers of other women, starting with women in Butaleja.

Working with rural women in local communities



HERS-EA Administrator, Loyce Hamba facilitating a discussion with rural women in Butaleja, regarding menstruation management.

This group will be trained by another group of women from Bulambuli District in Eastern Uganda, in making re-usable sanitary pads

Opportunity to publish

Following an abstract submitted by Professor Khaita HERS-EA has been granted a rare opportunity to publish a chapter in ‘University Partnership for Academic Program and Professional Development’, part of a series titled: **Innovation in Higher Education Teaching and Learning (IHETL) Vol.7.**

Discussions are underway to publish a full book about HERS-EA to which many of the members will have an opportunity to contribute; look out for details in the June newsletter!

Collaboration & Partnerships established:

HERS-EA has established close collaboration with AFRISA. Those who attended the Launch Conference might recall that Professor Kabasa challenged HERS-EA to model the AFRISA vision of transforming women from peasants to empowered decision makers through ‘value addition’ activities. HERS-EA has embraced this vision; more in the next section.....

HERS-EA has also established links with African Village Support (www.africanvillagesupport.org) which operates in rural communities in Eastern Uganda. This has led to close partnership with groups of rural women, mothers of girls, expected future HERS-EA members.

Through Professor Khaita, HERS-EA has established collaborations with Mississippi State University (MSU) and provided links to MSU International Institute, and various international organizations (USAID, Carnegie Corporation of New York)

Upcoming events (subject to funding):

- ◆ Participation at the HERS Denver Summer Institute, application deadline March 13th.
- ◆ Post HERS-EA Launch workshop in July 2015; logistics under negotiation
- ◆ HERS-EA Curriculum Development workshop later in 2015

HERS-EA website: www.hers-ea.org

The website is still at prototype stage currently managed by a busy volunteer. The interim management committee expects to engage a website manager in the near future. We would love to hear your ideas about what you want to see on the website and how you can help with its management.

Challenges.....

The interim committee and all those who initiated the HERS-EA ‘dream’ are committed to implementing its objectives. The challenges below are therefore perceived as ‘temporary’ obstacles whose solutions are somewhere around the corner:

- ◆ Funding for the activities outlined above
- ◆ Keeping in touch with all stakeholders, especially government ministries/ departments
- ◆ Office accommodation/a physical address equipped to the required standard
- ◆ Keeping to the implementation plan