

## IRFF UK: Supporting the Girl Child in Africa

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April 29, 2026

[www.irff-uk.org](http://www.irff-uk.org)



## Girls are back in school – and staying

One of the most telling sounds at schools in Uganda is the ordinary noise of children turning up, day after day.

For the **heads of those schools**, that constancy is new enough to notice.

At Busabala Primary School, the headmaster explained that, for some girls, coming to class used to depend on their menstrual cycle rather than the school timetable.



PRACTICAL HELP, BIG CHANGES – The Girl Child programme is changing the lives of more than 700 girls in three Ugandan schools.

## **When periods and pregnancy kept girls away**

The Girl Child / WAIT programme was the reason for that change. What began as a response to period poverty has grown steadily through the work of local leadership, particularly Jesca Nakamanyisa, headmistress of Destiny Junior School. Today, the programme works across three schools – Destiny Junior School, Busabala Primary School and Jjungo Church of Uganda Primary School – reaching more than 700 girls each month.

The work itself focuses on **menstrual hygiene education, guidance on self-care and decision-making, and the regular provision of sanitary pads and knickers.** Its effects continue to reach further than expected.

Before the programme, many girls used rags or leaves during menstruation, and school attendance often dropped away. Jesca's reports to IRFF UK describe how that pattern has shifted.



### **ZERO PREGNANCIES, HIGHER ATTENDANCE**

***“We’ve provided sanitary pads and knickers, ensuring girls stay in school during their menstrual periods.”***

***“We’re thrilled to report no new teenage pregnancies,***

*improved class performance and concentration, and increased girls' enrolment."*

writes Destiny School's headmistress Jesca this year.

## **Evidence from the classrooms**

The same changes are visible to school leadership. At Busabala, the headmaster described how attendance has stabilised.

*"Some girls used to dodge coming to school because they feared getting their period and had nothing to use," he said. "Now they are regular. Even if they get periods, they have a solution."*

Alongside practical support, the WAIT programme encourages children to delay sexual activity and make careful choices as they grow. Its impact at Busabala has been clear.

*"We don't have any new cases of early pregnancy," the headmaster said. "None at all."*

## **New borehole is central to school attendance**

As attendance has improved, new pressures have followed.

Hygiene depends on reliable access to water, and at Busabala

School, **the water well funded and built by IRFF UK has become**

**central to daily school life.**

The well now supports the school during shortages and provides limited access to the surrounding community. With better sanitation has come a reduction in illness and absence.

***“Water is life,”*** the headmaster of Busabala School reminds us.

***“Minus water, there’s no way you can promote sanitation.”***



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## **Success brings responsibility**

***“The poor child on the lakeshores of Lake Victoria who never dreamt of having a decent life is seeing a big change,”*** Jesca wrote.

***“Attendance and concentration in school have improved.”***

This is where success brings new responsibility. As the programme proves effective, enrolment rises and needs increase. Monthly support is expected to reach £600 to maintain supplies, with further requests likely as the work continues.

**Nothing about this work makes headline news. Nevertheless, it is life-changing,** and continued success depends on your support. If you would like to help sustain what is already taking root, details on how to support the Girl Child programme are provided below.

Support Girl Child here

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Your support will keep our essential Girl Child project running.

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