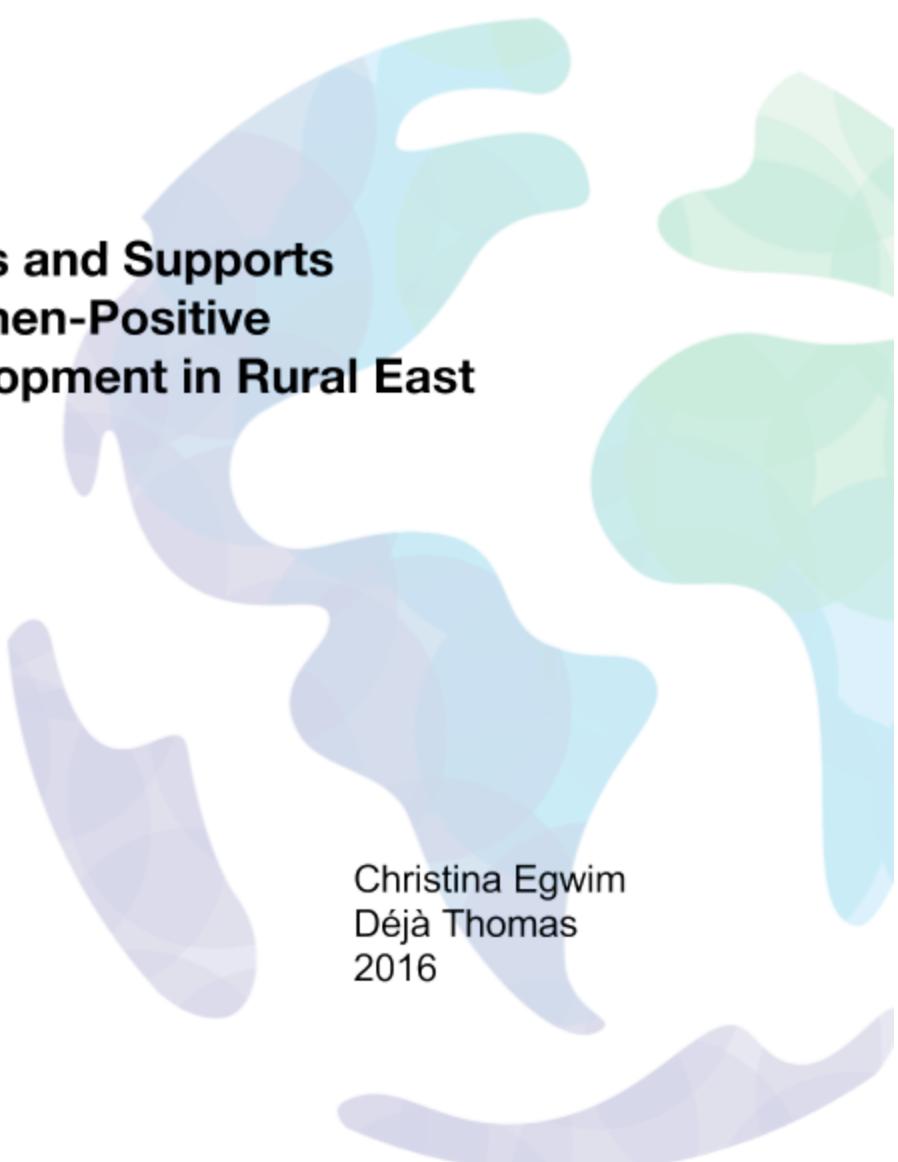


Disruption:

**How Bana Creates and Supports
Networks for Women-Positive
Sustainable Development in Rural East
Africa**



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2016



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Table of Contents

About This Document	3
Introduction.....	5
Sensitize.....	8
Educate.....	12
Operate.....	21
Conclusion.....	28
About Our Methods.....	30
Works Cited.....	31

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About this Document

This report provides a Theory of Change Profile for Bana, a community-based, innovative social enterprise in Mpigi, Uganda. Bana manufactures affordable, biodegradable sanitary pads from banana pseudo-stems. It spreads awareness and education about the importance of menstrual health in rural Ugandan villages.

The title word of this report is inspired by the approach to social entrepreneurship presented by Roger L. Martin and Sally R. Osberg's "Getting Beyond Better: How Social Entrepreneurship Works".² Those authors describe how social entrepreneurs target social systems in a stable but unjust equilibrium – and then disrupt this to create a more just, humane, and compassionate world. This is what Bana does: it disrupts the unjust social conditions that hold back women's health and agency. This report will present Bana as a disruptive social enterprise, and explain its theory of change through narratives of stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The founder and CEO of Bana, Richard Bbaale completed the Global Social Benefit Institute (GSBI) program in 2012, and has collaborated with Miller Center over the past five years. Bana has hosted three cohorts of Global Social Benefit Fellows to conduct participatory action research in 2014, 2015, and 2016. After the first two summers of research, the CEO and Miller Center staff discussed the need for a document that fully explains Bana's theory of change. This document is a product of the 2016 participatory action research. For more information on the research methods, please see the note at the end of the document.

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Richard Bbaale, the founder and CEO of Bana. Born and raised in Mpigi, Uganda. Richard's humble demeanor is what helps keep Bana approachable in the villages they serve.



Jeremiah Kimbugwe, Director of Operation of Bana. His ability to connect with everyone from schoolchildren to village elders helps Bana sensitize and educate new villages.

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Introduction

Thick fields of green seem to stretch for miles in each direction along the main road that travels from Kampala to Mpigi. Boisterous fishermen market their fresh and fried tilapia by waving their delicacies in the air, in hopes that a hungry traveler may stop by for a quick bite. Once in Mpigi a quick left turn onto a bumpy road leads to the Bana headquarters and production site.

The refreshing, crisp breeze coming off of Lake Victoria greets you as you pull up. The Bana Family also greets you as well with smiles, waves, and “oli otya’s” (how are you). The ‘immediate’ Bana family consists of Richard Bbaale and the Director of Operations, Jeremiah Kimbugwe, but also women working at the factory, interns from Makerere University, and staff. Bana’s ‘extended’ family includes Champions, School Teachers, Village Chairpersons, and many others that spans other districts in Uganda. The passion and desire to keep the enterprise running and empower more girls and women is what keeps this family together. These familial relationships make and keep Bana a community-based social enterprise.

In a country with a rapidly growing and youthful population, Bana aims to address the needs of girls and young women in ways that government programs and foreign aid have fallen short.¹ Bana provides women’s health education and sells affordable sanitary pads to girls in rural Uganda. Women in the rural villages are also trained to sell the pads, and they retain approximately 16% of the revenue -- they are called Champions. The increased financial stability of Champion families provides rural Ugandan families opportunities to participate in the economy, and to break the cycle of poverty. Even Ugandan citizens living above the poverty have difficulty accessing essential products and services needed for education, health, and dignified livelihoods.

The challenges faced by Ugandan society as a whole are acute for young girls in rural areas. The rural poverty level in Uganda is higher than in urban areas, and oftentimes, school-related expenses act as barriers for girls seeking to attend school. Already strapped

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for cash, families struggle to purchase commercial sanitary pads at a cost of approximately 5,000 Ugandan shillings (approximately 1.50 USD). Even when girls can afford to stay in school and buy sanitary pads, many mature without understanding the importance of proper menstruation management because there is no standardized health education provided. In this context, myths about menstruation -- from the requirement to stay home to using leaves for menstruation management-- have filled the gap and have entered common knowledge. This results in girls and women engaging in unsafe methods and not protecting themselves. The Banapad is a safe, affordable, and effective sanitary pad that provides a sanitary way of managing menstruation. Customers receive both the locally manufactured pad and menstruation education upon purchase.

The social mission of Bana is to better the lives of rural girls and women. Bana achieves this by leading community educational programs and business skills workshops for women, providing girls in and out of school mature with proper menstruation knowledge, and nurturing basic skills to provide for themselves financially. By conducting these trainings with various women in the villages, Bana is building a network of Champions to educate girls and women, and sell Banapads. This approach of integrating community education and business skills addresses three distinct groups of individuals served by Bana: those who do not understand the importance of proper menstruation management, those who are aware of the importance of good hygiene but cannot afford the means of maintaining it, and those who are unaware that their current methods of menstruation management are unhealthy and detrimental.

Bana realizes its mission through the following key activities: sensitizing, educating, and operating. Through sensitization, education, and operations, Bana creates powerful social change at the individual and household level, but also activates wide-scale, comprehensive communal change regarding menstruation. The current equilibrium consists of non-governmental organizations providing free pads to rural Ugandan women and girls, which slightly increases access to proper menstruation management methods, but has not stimulated change around the way that communities understand and approach

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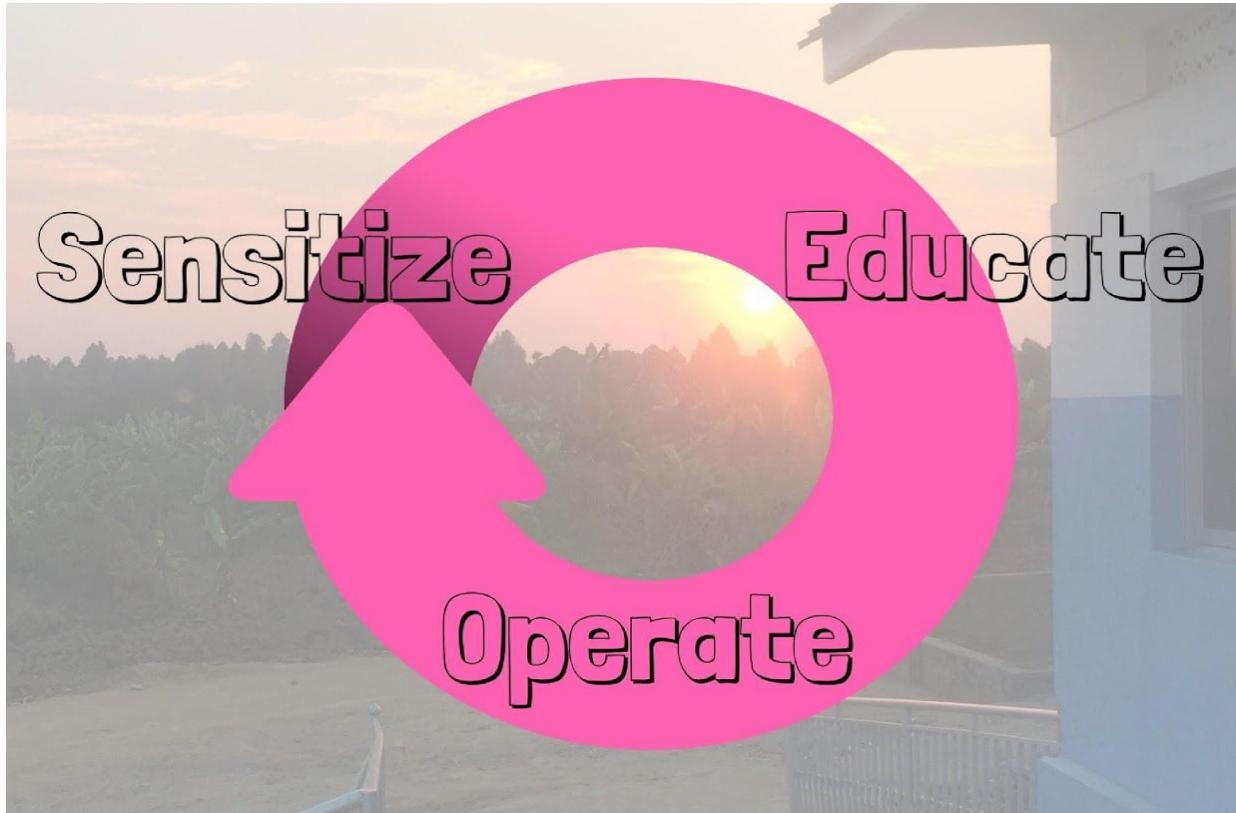


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menstruation. By providing access to pads, education about menstrual health, and a supportive network of change in villages Bana disrupts the existing social equilibrium in rural Uganda. Through this disruption, genuine sustainable change can be created for girls and women in rural Uganda.²



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Sensitize

Many young girls and women in rural Uganda are unaware of the importance of proper menstruation management, and of the benefits health education can have on their overall health. In order to address those unaware of the importance of proper menstrual hygiene, Bana begins by sensitizing the community on menstrual hygiene, and follows this by explaining how Bana products can contribute to the health of girls and women.

Bana staff approach community leaders to explain Bana's mission. Bana knows they need community leaders on their side to truly impact the villages. Respect for communities and a certain level of humility are both important for their work. Many community leaders are intrigued and listen with receptive ears. These leaders, who are often times village elders, then take their newfound knowledge and spread awareness in their own communities about Bana and menstruation management.

The immediate effects of this are on the families of the community leaders. Nuulu Nalubiri, the 14-year-old daughter of Bukibura Village Chairperson Nalubiri, learned about Bana from her father. Like many girls, Nuulu looks away and picks at her fingers when discussing life before Bana products. After a bit of conversation, however, a confidence slowly overtakes her and she makes more eye contact when explaining how her father introduced her family to Bana. After several conversations with Bana staff, her father told her mother about Bana so that his daughters could benefit from this new awareness. Even though she still has questions, she now knows that she can seek out answers from Bana. In time, her father connected Bana with a women's group and a school to spread awareness of menstrual health. Simply having these high level community members become aware of Bana sparks change in their own families, and in the broader community. Connecting with

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village chairpersons serves as a “top-down” approach to spreading awareness. Bana also takes a “bottom-up” approach by spreading awareness with individual community members.

Some of the most important and influential members of the community are members of the Village Health Team. People on these teams are the “on-the-ground” faces of healthcare in these rural Ugandan villages. Village members come to the people on these teams with questions about healthcare, and often times for support with an existing health condition. Village Health Teams are equipped with the knowledge to answer basic questions about health, and may refer community members to the nearest health clinic. One such team member, Sylvia in the Bukibura Village, gracefully balances local knowledge and government health training when responding to the immediate and basic health concerns in the Mpigi District. Her potential to succeed as a Village Health Team member was recognized by village leaders, who recommended her for the position.

Women and girls alike speak of Sylvia with a warm admiration for her emotional support and efforts to enhance their health and wellbeing. As a member of the Village Health Team for seven years, her influence in the community has spread tremendously. Her dedication and passion for a healthy community propelled her through the required government training and allowed her to be one of two local Village Health Team members. As a mother of four daughters, Sylvia immediately recognized that the health training she received during her government training did not include practical information about menstrual health, or women’s health in general.



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Sylvia's passion for women's health led her to become a Champion, and allowed for her to supplement her government training with practical and scientific knowledge of menstruation. Her love and devotion for all the women who come to her has allowed her to be known around the Bukibura village as a resource for women and girls. This awareness of Sylvia's work is how Shakirah, a 15-year-old in the village, learned about Sylvia and Bana.

Shakirah, also from Bukibura Village, speaks about her experience with menstruation in the way most mature women would. She makes direct eye contact with everyone, and a sly look appears on her face when she says something she knows is precocious. She walks with her head held high, and with each step, her gait is wide and strong. The self-assuredness would be the envy of many an adult woman. She was shaken when she began menstruating. The only information she had received about menstruation was how to fold pieces of fabric found around her home to add to the cotton lining of her underwear to mimic a pad. For Shakirah, even talking about the time she used cloth triggers a visible change in her whole demeanor. She crosses her arms and squint her eyes as she describes how uncomfortable she felt using cloths. She evinces disgust. Not only did she have to change the cloth every thirty minutes, she also had to walk carefully as to not let the cloth move around too much.

Unhappy with her methods of managing menstruation, Shakirah sought out other options. One day she went to Sylvia's home to seek more information and bought pads shortly after--and regained her confident stride. The community-wide awareness of Sylvia and her role as both a Village Health Team Member and a Bana Champion allows her to help many girls like Shakirah who simply do not realize that pads are available to them.

With a huge smile on her face and sparkle in her eyes, Sylvia describes how blessed she feels to receive the training from Bana and help girls like Shakirah. She looks towards her village with the look a mother toward her child after a job well done. Sylvia believes that Bana's work begins with raising awareness, because people do not have enough information about

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menstruation. This results in girls and women using unsafe and unsanitary materials, such as pieces of cloth and leaves. Bana has become more than a supplement for her Village Health Team training. Bana trains and supports women like Sylvia in creating awareness about menstrual health throughout her village. By training village leaders, like Sylvia, with menstruation and women's health knowledge, Bana is weaving a network of individuals that can spread awareness about menstruation and women's health both formally and informally.

When women and girls discover that they can access health products and a network of educational resources, they are hungry to learn more. Ultimately, the sensitization that Bana builds is key in changing the narrative of menstruation and fostering a network of change agents in villages. Bana works towards dismantling the obstacles that women face while trying to access education and health, however, its efforts are slowed by a lack of data. Having real-time, gender-desegregated data depicting levels of awareness about menstruation and existing women's health programs would allow Bana, and the Ugandan government, to better understand the villages they serve. This would allow Bana to adapt its programs and operations to particular community needs.

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Educate

The villages that Bana serves express an eagerness for education and skills development. School girls in menstruation education workshops and business skills trainings crowd around the presenter and take meticulous notes. The women's groups who benefit from these workshops intently listen and interact with the examples the instructor gives during the business skills training. These opportunities for the education of both young girls and older women are what allow Bana to impact parts of the communities that don't realize the importance of proper menstruation management. Through relationships with Champions, Catholic Priests, and Village Chairpersons in villages throughout western rural Uganda, Bana accesses small groups of girls in various schools and women's groups.



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In the primary schools, many girls only know the many myths about menstruation. The myth that every girl seemed to know was that if they picked fruit from a tree while menstruating the tree would go barren. Other myths encouraged girls to stay home while menstruating, and not talk to boys while menstruating. Even as girls become secondary school students and begin to menstruate, they convey a certain reluctance to address these issues. In conversation, they fall silent, fiddle with their hands, and avoid eye contact with anyone when the subject of menstruation is brought up. Bana refutes these myths by explaining the origins of myths, the naturalness of menstruation, and proper hygiene during menstruation—which includes using pads.

In order to make the girls even more comfortable with the concept and reality of menstruation during each educational session girls are called on to practice putting a Banapad on what they term “knickers,” otherwise known as underwear. The girls turn to each other and giggle while trying to avoid eye contact so that they are not called on. When one girl is finally called on to demonstrate using a Banapad her eyes go wide and she slowly drags her feet to the front of the classroom while giggling with the other girls. After some quiet chuckles, the girls demonstrating the use of a Banapad furrows their eyebrows and hold the pad away from her body as if it was a smelly sock. Using the tips of their fingers the girls slowly try and put the pad on the pair of underwear Bana Staff or Champion provides. Some girls are successful on the first try other girls are not, and then their friends come up to try and help them. Despite the laughter and embarrassment, all the girls leave with better knowledge of how to handle menstruation when they experience it.

In addition to menstruation education, these workshops provide business skills training. School girls and young women learn how to start



Two girls at Bukibura Primary School attempt to put a Banapad onto knickers.

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and run small businesses so that they can afford Banapads, but also become financially independent. In almost all of these trainings, teachers and head masters or mistresses alike sit on the sides of the room taking notes of both the menstruation education segment and the business education portion of the program. This creates a space at the schools where the girls know that they can go to their teachers for help and questions. As Bana returns to the schools multiple times, to teach new girls and follow up on business skills trainings, social discomfort -- the avoidance of eye contact and hushed giggles -- turns into strong, loud voices and steady eye contact. The women's group workshops follow the similar pattern, and serves to create a community of support and can pass this knowledge down to their children with confidence.

The business skills training gives both the schoolgirls and older women the ability to be financially independent, because they are given the knowledge of how to make money on their own and properly manage their own money. This is done by teaching the 4 P's (Place, Product, Promotion, and Price), direct and indirect cost, and record keeping.

At some schools, teachers choose girls to become a part of the school's Enterprise Clubs that Bana has created with the teachers. These clubs develop basic business principles among the schoolgirls, but also strategies for putting this knowledge into action. Enterprise Club members get menstruation management and business training from Bana, and they receive additional training so that they can educate their peers and further develop their business skills.

Bana teaches them how to make liquid soap, so that they can put their newfound knowledge to use buying ingredients, making and selling the soap, and accurately keeping track of the finances involved. The cost of each ingredient and necessary tools are explained. Everyone from schoolgirls to teachers and women at women's group become actively engaged in these trainings. Even the shy and hesitant girls from the menstruation workshops write detailed notes and raise their hands to ask a question or volunteer to help make the liquid soap. Bana works with the women's groups and schools to sell the

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ingredients to them at a discounted price for their girls and women to utilize in putting their business skills to practical use.



These education activities are repeated to reinforce the health and business practices taught at the workshops. This allows Bana to foster personal relationships with everyone involved. Furthermore, the educational programs allow Bana to reach girls and women with various levels of knowledge about menstruation, ranging from girls who have not yet begun menstruating to women who have always used cloths and never accessed pads before.

All of this proves important because some girls perform poorly in school when menstruating. A primary school teacher and Champion, Florence from the Masaka District, says that girls attending school tend to perform poorly when menstruating, because they are constantly worried about leaking through their clothes. The poor performance can lead to

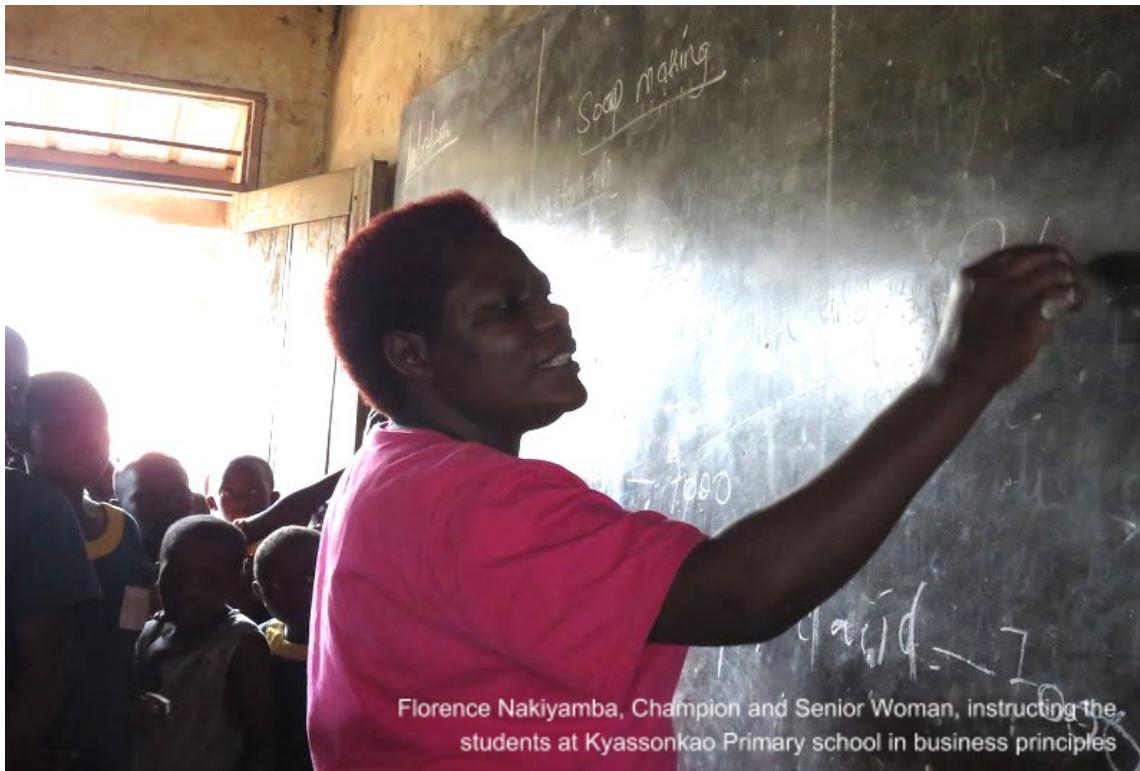
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dropping out of school for many of these girls. The solemn look in her eyes conveys to her students: "you are nothing in this world without a primary education." Florence is determined to make sure every girl becomes someone in this world. She has been a wonderful source of love and positive change in her community with contagious happiness and friendliness.



Florence Nakiyamba, Champion and Senior Woman, instructing the students at Kyassonkao Primary school in business principles

Florence greets everyone with a hug, a big smile and laughter. The familiar tone in her voice makes everyone feel like they have known her for years. Her joy and happiness is contagious, whether to her students who get excited upon laying eyes on her, or with the smile that creeps upon an old friend's face as they meet for the first time in a while. Her ability to make anyone feel welcomed and happy has made her an amazing teacher, which is why she was proudly elected to be the Senior Woman at her school. Senior Women are in charge of the girls issues at her school--including menstruation.

Florence uses her training and education as a Champion to enrich the support she gives her students. Florence has created times during the school year where all the girls

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come together, and it is free time for them to ask any question they want. Usually the topic of menstruation becomes the subject of the conversation. Florence uses the space to educate her students about the facts of menstrual health in a supportive environment.

Florence specifically utilizes her roles as both a Senior Woman and Champion to provide intentional support, guidance, and education for students who do not have mothers. In those cases, Florence sometimes becomes their only source of advice and guidance in areas relating to becoming a woman, because their fathers cannot talk about this and their mother is not there to teach them. Florence feels it is her job to educate her students both academically and personally; giving girls the skills to advance in life and knowledge to take care of themselves. The knowledge Bana has provided her has enriched other parts of her life, she says, as she smiles and pats her hair. “We are parents, we are teachers, and at the same time we are Champions,” she says.

Bana goes beyond enabling teachers, like Florence, to better educate and support girls about menstruation. Bana also helps schoolgirls to educate each other through peer-to-peer discussion. Several groups of girls are members of Bana’s Enterprise Clubs, which provide them extra training in health education and business skills. The girls at Holy Family Nazareth Secondary School in Rakai, in western Uganda, have been participants in this program for some time. They speak to one another and their peers about menstruation with conviction. When together for additional training the girls there was always a sea of hands to choose from for answering questions. Their knowledge of menstrual health and



Florence Nakiyamba, Champion and Senior woman at many schools including the Kyassonkao Primary school (Pictured in background)

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business is so well developed that conversations with them flow fluidly, and someone educated in menstrual health may learn something new themselves.

One girl walks to the front of the class with a sure step and faces the class to demonstrate how she would educate a peer about menstruation. She uses her hands to illustrate her points--pantomiming putting on a pad and moving her hands in a circular motion when she is briefly stuck on what to say next. She looks up to the ceiling during these moments, and shortly after remembers what the next steps in the process are. The girls in the room listen intently to her explanation, often nodding in agreement and giving encouragement when she pauses and looks to the ceiling, straining to remember. These moments allow for the girls to practice delivery of their knowledge in a supportive, sisterly environment.



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Practice becomes important when their classmates come to them for advice about how to manage their menstruation. The girls in the Enterprise Club are able to educate their peers whether she is distraught because she started her period in school, or she heard a myth from someone else. Proper education and menstruation management thus comes from both the Champions in the village and teachers, but also their own peers.

All of the work Bana does with teachers and students to educate them about menstruation for their health and business skills for their livelihoods compensates for the shortcomings of Uganda's rural education system. Since there is no current government program to deliver critical accurate health information inside and outside of schools in a standardized way. Thus, young girls lack critical health information they need to address the changes they experience during puberty. In the absence of knowledge about reproductive and sexual health, girls and young women are at risk of negative health impacts. Bana has done an exceptional job in beginning to disrupt this unjust equilibrium, but it reaches but 3 of the 111 districts in Uganda. Plans to expand their educational and business efforts are essential in not only providing people knowledge about menstrual health, but also helping them to take action to improve their overall health and their families' health.

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A group of girls from the enterprise club at Holy Family Nazareth Secondary School mixing together the ingredients for liquid soap. The girls learn about the cost involved in making it, and how to make sure they are making a profit.

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Operate

The business operations of the social enterprise are key in making Banapads accessible to girls and young women who otherwise could not afford them. The sensitization and education efforts create demand for Banapads, and thus operations would be difficult without the first two aspects. Bana operations includes the manufacturing of Banapads and the sales of the pads by Champions.

Bana is not run as a conventional enterprise, but rather as a village business. People work at Bana, but the spirit of Bana world headquarters conveys the sense of an extended family all working toward a shared goal. Women come from their homes to work at the production facility, sometimes accompanied by young children slowly trailing them as they stop and play. As women work at the production facility they greet each other with smiles and hugs before their work. The warmth and productivity of this workspace is evident from both the laughter and smiles of the women as one walks by and the sounds of pounding the Banana pseudostems for fiber or the machines run by the women to shred the fibers and put the pads together. Some of the critical processes are not evident to the uninitiated, such as drying the Banana fibers for days, sometimes weeks, until the fiber is completely dry, or the chemical processes used to transform the small pieces of fiber into a cotton-like material that is used as the base of the pad.

This communal work environment buzzes with productivity, manufacturing some 4,600 packets of ten pads every week, with one rural women producing 92 packets per shift, five days a week. Once pads are manufactured, Bana depends on rural women—the Champions--to sell them. The Champions play an important part in Bana's operations. Without the Champions' community network and efforts to spread awareness, educate, and sell pads, Bana could never reach its target population, nor achieve its social mission.

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A woman from Bukibura Village who works in the Bana manufacturing process. She is hanging the Banana psuedostem to dry in the sun.

Women share their success with other women in their community, and this word-of-mouth recruitment is how Bana makes first contact with the majority of its Champions. Once Bana staff recruit new women, they educate and train them in basic women's health and business principles. After several intensive trainings and a probationary period, these women become Champions, and are able to sell Banapads to girls and women in their community. Champions receive a backpack full of Banapads to sell and a t-shirt identifying them as a Champion. This "business in a bag" micro-franchise model allows the women to keep 16% of the revenue from sales.

When they achieve their sales goals, Champions earn approximately 1 million Ugandan shillings (300 USD) in extra income every year. Several Bana staff explain this

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seemingly modest amount of extra income: many rural families spend decades to save 5 million Ugandan Shillings (approximately 1500 USD) to build a house for themselves. Thus, this modest increase in income greatly enhances the Champion's ability to support their families. In the year 2016, 184 women are active Champions. An additional 236 Champions are inactive and unable to participate fully, either because they are in a probationary period, or they lack product to sell. Because Bana still relies on hand machines, it is not able to produce sufficient pads to keep up with demand. Active Champions reap financial benefits, and contribute to their community by sharing the education they receive with their communities. Inactive Champions still receive the benefits of menstruation education and business skills.



Champion Sarah Bayiga exemplifies how Bana provides a diverse array of benefits to Champions and their communities. As a Champion for five years, Sarah's success inspires her community and family. As Sarah recounts the various ways in which Bana has impacted her life she sums it up simply: "I have changed."

The change Sarah alludes to is hard to discern because of her gentle and humble demeanor. With time, it becomes evident that Sarah's whole life has changed due to becoming a Champion. The business skills learned and women's reproductive health knowledge Sarah has gained have enhanced her income and helped her grow as a leader.

All of the success and knowledge Sarah has garnered provides direct benefits for her own children. Prior to becoming a Champion, Sarah taught her four daughters what she knew: traditional knowledge about menstruation. This included evasion of all conversation

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with boys while menstruating, staying home while menstruating, and using pieces of cloth, old mattresses, or leaves to soak up the blood. Her training to become a Champion helped Sarah quickly recognize her mistaken ideas, and has since educated her daughters properly. She is now training her eldest son about the process of being supportive to his sisters -- and future wife -- when they are menstruating.

The extra income and business skills earned and learned from working as a Bana Champion have allowed her to open her own store in the Bukibira Village. While Sarah waves off any compliment, saying it is but a modest store, it is clearly important to her village. The store is surrounded by other small storefronts offering various services from clothes to 'boda boda' (motorcycle) repairs. There is a notable increase in children and women walking and talking in this area, and cars stopping partially blocking the road. Sarah's small storefront packs in everything from soda and beer to flour and rice -- and Banapads. Since this is the only store like it in her town, Sarah is able to interact with majority of her community simply from running her business.

Her newfound business savvy means she can be a resource and change agent in her own community for anyone who comes to her store for water, snacks, or any other items. Sarah takes the time to educate her customers, especially young girls, on the necessity of proper hygiene while menstruating and how Banapads can be useful. The health problems she has observed are mainly from those who use of methods of menstruation management other than pads. Many come to her for advice and guidance when it comes to menstruation management. The most serious and concerning incidents are when young girls come to Sarah after having shared cloths with other female members of their families who are HIV positive. Sarah is determined to be a resource to these girls, and has worked with Bana to ensure that her training extends beyond just menstruation.

While Sarah was humble and quiet in her success, the warmth and joy of Champion Agatha is felt as soon as one meets her. Agatha has been with Bana almost since the beginning of the company, conferring upon her the status of Senior Champion. Her soft smile and warm eyes gently place a sense of belonging over someone. With a charismatic

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personality and laughter that carries for what seems like miles, Agatha's accomplishments as a Champion are no surprise, and it allowed her to save enough money selling Banapads to open her own school, Kisa Kya Maria Nursery and Primary School. Opening a school was always a dream of Agatha's as a school teacher that she was able to realize only after becoming a Champion.

The school children running around and laughing during lunch are given an education in the academic sense, but also in terms of menstruation education and counseling. All of the girls in the school receive menstruation education and counseling once they reach 12 years old. This creates a space where academic and personal growth are supported and encouraged, which in turn gives rise to a generation of schoolgirls in Sarah's village with proper knowledge about menstruation and their own reproductive health. When they become adults, they will then pass this onto their own children.

Agatha's ability to blend her love for education and her knowledge as a Champion enables girls at her school to grow and form healthy habits. Agatha's role as a Champion not only blends with her love of education, but also allows her to help uplift other women in her community. She has created a women's group in her village named Kanabulemu Rural Development Organization (KRUDO). The group serves as a way for young mothers and women in the community to support one another, and make additional income. Agatha acts as both the loveable leader and the ardent organizer of the group. Hand written schedules and tasks are on the insides of the walls of the groups meeting places. Collecting Banana pseudostems for Bana is one of the tasks that the women take turns completing. Agatha is able to take her role as a Champion, and relationship with Bana, to benefit her community. The success of Agatha as a Champion spills over into her entire community. Thus, manufacturing pads and training rural women to sell the pads is not only enriching and improving the life of the Champion, but also the lives of those around her.⁴

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KRUDO has its meetings and other work inside of this BanaPads psuedostem collection center. Agatha can be seen in the pink shirt and Jeremiah, the Director of Operations, can be seen to the right of the door.



Bana aspires to reach more women like Sarah and Agatha, and to scale their operations as well. Many of their inactive Champions would return to selling pads were they to have access to them. By mechanizing parts of the pad manufacturing process, Bana can increase its production. With more Champions selling more pads, and women collecting banana fibers the economic and social benefits will spill over into other parts of these communities, as illustrated by Sarah and Agatha.

Sarah and Agatha have been able to take their training and financial stability as a Champion and further support their village. The way they have blended their talents and passions is common among all Champions. Champions add to the network for positive

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change that Bana fosters, because they take their new knowledge and help their village in ways that others have not.

The change that Bana inspires in Champions and customers lays the foundation for its future. Demand for Banapads outpaces the company's capacity to produce and distribute them. Moreover, it has identified unmet needs in the villages it serves, for example, sanitary pads of various sizes, soap for hygienic purposes, and knickers to hold pads in place. Bana is committed to changing the way rural villages understand and approach menstruation, and as it expands to more villages, it will continue to engage and adapt to the needs of communities.



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Conclusion

Bana's theory of change appears quite simple on paper: to sensitize the community, educate the community, and operate the enterprise. However, Bana's approach to disrupting the existing social equilibrium is innovative and dynamic. Bana understands local communities and existing social networks, and enters into relationships with them. Every practice, story, and perspective mentioned in this document is a testament to Bana's identity as a social enterprise, but also an active part of these communities. The entire Bana family -- Richard (the CEO), Jeremiah (the Director of Operations), staff, Champions, school girls, women groups, and everyone in each of those groups -- is changing the way rural Ugandans understand and manage menstruation. The support this 'family' provides helps villages to cope with the lack of other essential services.

This "simple" theory of change quickly becomes multidimensional, and it evolves as Bana engages new communities. It extends its network of women change agents by equipping teachers, mothers, members of the healthcare community, girls, and community members with knowledge about proper menstruation management and business skills. Bana thus creates and supports local networks of positive change. This allows for Bana to promote change among individuals, households, and eventually the whole community. Simultaneous work for change at all three levels creates the opportunity for success that has propelled Bana from a small enterprise with little to no resources to a multi-village, still small, but dynamic social enterprise.

While, this document presents the theory of change in a linear format, in reality, the sensitization, education, and operations happen simultaneously across various villages, schools, and individuals. In the very same village and at the same time, Champions, enterprise clubs, and women's groups are fostering awareness of menstrual health and the value of Banapads. Bana's success demonstrates how to successfully disrupt an equilibrium that leaves rural girls and women without knowledge of proper menstruation management and little economic opportunities.

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To expand its impact, Bana needs to train more active Champions to educate and sell pads, mechanize production to produce more pads, and foster a stronger network of change agents across East Africa. This work of this enterprise demonstrates the importance of access to pads, education on proper menstruation management, and community engagement for the global community. Bana's dynamic and multidimensional theory of change has impacted over 50,000 rural girls and women, yet the Bana family's dreams are only now beginning to take shape. The coming years will bring disruption indeed!



Champions sit preparing to educate the village!

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A note about our methods

The field component of this research was conducted over the course of 8 weeks. The methods used were ethnographic observations and informal interviews.³ The Fellows observed how Bana staff interacted with members of local communities and how they conduct their menstruation education workshops and business skills training. The observations were done at two primary schools and five secondary schools, with over 150 school girls in attendance, five community meeting places, one health clinic, one Bana collection center, and repeatedly at Bana headquarters. The 28 group and individual interviews were conducted with Champions, users, parents of users, teachers, and health clinic workers. The interview guide for the interviews -- created collaboratively with the Bana team -- included questions pertaining to the impact the enterprise has had on personal lives and the communities, as well as suggestions for improvement of Bana services and products.



Fellows (left to right) Deja Thomas and Christina Egwim, and Bana staff (left to right) Grace, Jackie, and Shannon enjoying the company of Champion, Maria Natumbwe (in the red shirt).

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