

JMERC

JM EDUCATION & RESEARCH CENTRE



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23

ANNUAL REPORT



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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It takes a village to raise a child, our school wide ecosystem of support caters for all the stake holders taking involved in a learners' life. By engaging them, we ensure a coordinated cycle speaking the same language that will enable the learner to learn, achieve and thrive.

Dear esteemed partners,

This report is meant to highlight our milestones and achievement for the year 2023 in reference to our five-year strategic plan (2023-2027). We worked with schools and communities to ensure that all children and youth therein learn, achieve and thrive. At JMERC we believe that education is important tool to achieve gender equality and social cohesion.

Using our School-wide Ecosystem Model, we managed to conduct successful training and mentorship of adolescent girls on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH). Our model does not train and mentor girls in isolation because we believe that while girls need to develop agency, they need the support and understanding of other people including the boys they study with. For this reason, we engaged boys in the same trainings we provided to the girls.

We also conducted successful training and mentorship for teachers on critical pedagogy and formative assessment. School leaders were trained and inducted in adaptive leadership while we continued to engage parents in dialogues.

Through parents/community dialogue sessions, we realised that the precarious situation of women heading families in rural communities. Despite heading households, they did not have any source of sustainable livelihoods. We also realised that this was huge contributory factor to high drop-out rates of students, especially girls. We thus started a livelihood programme for rural women focused on financial literacy, savings and credit schemes, and skilling for social venture development. So far the programme supports 200 rural women in Kabale district.

GOOD NEWS!

At the start of the year, we were blessed with a new funding partner - Echidna Giving. Welcome, Echidna

Giving to the JMERC family. Echidna Giving now joins our amazing partners and collaborators, enabling us to fulfil our missionary mandate to create a world where all children and youth, especially girls, learn, achieve and thrive. I thank you. These are your achievements because without your support, we wouldn't have made all this impact in the community. Moving into the New Year, we are deepening our intervention to impact more girls, youth as well as young mother/women in rural communities.

Yours sincerely

About us;

JM Education and Research Centre (JMERC) is a leading impact organisation in creating school-wide ecosystems enabling the most vulnerable children and youth, especially girls, to learn, achieve, and thrive. JMERC believes that creating nurturing and supportive systems and structures will help achieve education for all and gender equality.

OUR VISION

A world where all children and youth Learn, achieve, and thrive

OUR MISSION

We provide a school ecosystem of support to uplift learners' life-outcomes with a focus on intervention for youth, teachers, school leaders and caregivers.

OUR CORE VALUES

Hope - Optimism/Aspiration/Assurance/light at the end of the tunnel/Promise/Longing

Collaboration - Partnership/Alliance/Teamwork/Cooperation/Networking

Dependability - Trust/evidence-based/reliability/integrity

Audacity - Courage/Heroism/Guts/dynamism/Valour/Confidence

Strategic Priorities

- Girls' education and empowerment
- Life skills and values for youth
- Schools and Community Engagement
- Institutional Capacity Development
- Institutional internal Capacity to Scale





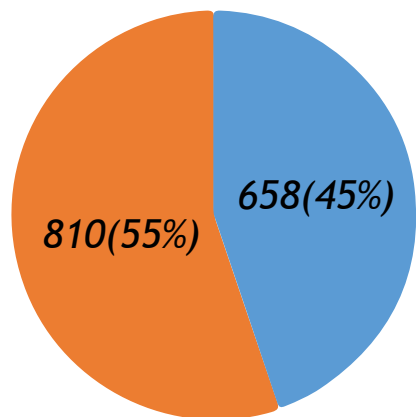
KEY HIGHLIGHTS

The following key highlights underscore the most central programme activities and outcomes that have underpinned our programme planning, implementation, challenges, and lessons we learned during the year **2023**. The highlights are important because they form the basis for the programme planning and implementation for the coming year **2024**.

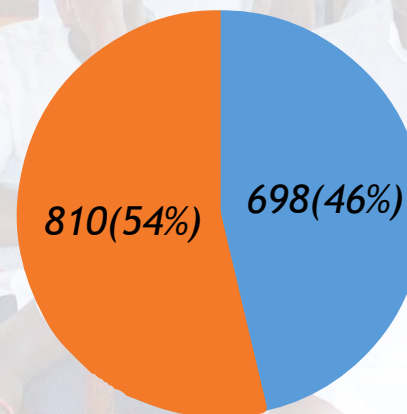
Girls' Education and Empowerment

Gender equity and equality in education continue to be the main focus of most of our programme activities. During the year **2023**, we have continued to respond to the needs of the most **vulnerable adolescent girls** in rural public and community schools. These girls were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, grossly affecting their educational and life goals. For this reason, we have paid particular attention to trainings and interventions to improve their **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) skills** and **Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)**. Instead of focusing on girls' alone programming, we use a mixed approach because we believe that boys are part of the ecosystem in which girls are impacted. For this reason, we not only focus on improving girls' agency but also the environment in which they are to exercise their agency.

**Below is our performance in this programme area.*



Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)



Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)



Teacher Professional Development Support

“Teachers, and the quality of their teaching output, are critical in determining student learning” (D’Angelo, et al., 2023, p. 4).



We believe that teachers are the most important school-level factor influencing the extent to which can learn, achieve and thrive. For this, we have devoted a big proportion our time in the year 2023 to develop teacher professional capacity in planning and delivery of learner-centred and gender-responsive classroom lessons.

During the year, our attention was focused on critical pedagogy which aims at enabling teachers to plan and deliver classroom lessons that call for higher order thinking skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and imagination. The second training has focused on the use of formative assessment in the teaching and learning processes. In critical pedagogy, we have trained and mentored **130 teachers** with **96 males** and **34 females**. This was then followed by a training on Formative Assessment and it was successfully completed by 88 of them; **63 males** and **25 females**.

School Leadership Support

We believe that supporting school leaders to develop structures and systems that support learning and are gender transformative is important if there is to be gender equity and equality in learning. During the course of the year 2023, we trained and engaged 25 school leaders including school principals, members of the school Boards of Governors.



Parents and Community Engagement

At JMERC, we believe that parents are the first and primary educators of their children. Children learn better when their parents are actively engaged in their education journey including engaging in school programmes, providing school requirements and social-emotional support. During the year 2023, we engaged



Teaching and Learning in Fragile Context

In the year 2023, JMERC was privileged to collaborate with CODE in launching the Teaching and Learning in Fragile Contexts (TLFC) research project. The project aims to support situated and transferable research on quality teaching and culturally relevant reading materials. This component of the project also intentionally facilitates the access and use of research by African education sector policymakers and practitioners to improve sustainable literacy and learning outcomes for children in African Refugee and IDP contexts, including in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Our main outputs were:

- Conducting a situational analysis of teaching and learning in fragile contexts within Sub-Saharan Africa;
- Creation of the African Research Network on TLFC

Adapting assessment into policy and learning (ADAPT)

We successfully concluded the project on Adapting Assessment into Policy and Learning (ADAPT) which focused on the 21st Century skills of adolescent girls in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. It was a highly engaging project, and together with the College of Education and External Studies (CEES) of Makerere University, we achieved the following outcomes/outputs

Sessions

- 10 capacity building sessions for civil society organisations learning and dissemination engagements
- 5 focused policy dialogue sessions
- 2 knowledge sharing workshops with the Media

37
civil society organisations

08
policy/assessment bodies

16
national media houses

05
educational institutes

Fostering sustainable livelihoods for women in rural communities

Through parents/community dialogues, we have learnt that most households within rural communities are women-headed. The role of paying children's school fees and fending for the family rests on the shoulders of women. However, they face the challenge of lack of financial access and financial literacy. In the year 2023, 200 rural women in Kabale district were mobilised and trained in financial literacy and launched their savings and Credit Schemes. A memorandum of understanding was reached with St. Pater's Vocational Secondary School, in Kabale to provide space and skills training as a basis for social venture development and sustainable livelihood.

As part of our vision, we want to turn 500 women into agents of rural transformation by developing sustainable livelihoods for women-headed households in in Kafunjo-Karweru community in Kabale, Uganda. We shall do this by amplifying the current savings and credit scheme, skills development and social venture development for women in this rural community. By developing sustainable livelihoods and economic empowerment of women, we have an opportunity to transform not only women but also their families and communities.

