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IMPACT FELLOWSHIP

THE **2023**
COHORT

2022-2023 Impact Fellows Bios

Benin

Ghislaine Akakpo

Ghislaine Akakpo has more than five years of experience improving the quality of education in rural areas of Benin. She is a 2021 Mandela Washington Fellow Alumna from the Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, and a 2022 Alumni Enrichment Institute Program Participant at the Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi.

As President of her non-governmental organization, ProGen Benin, Ghislaine is currently working to improve the accessibility and quality of education, especially for girls, in underserved regions of Benin. She has been mobilizing contributions in Benin and in the United States for local communities to improve the quality of education in their schools and ensure that children have full and equitable access to basic knowledge, as well as chances to develop life skills in a safe and supportive environment. In addition, Ghislaine volunteers with local associations to raise awareness about several diseases and gender-based violence and to mentor young female leaders. With her master's degree in law, she is committed to ensuring a suitable and inclusive educational environment for children from low-income families and to advocating for girls' education in rural areas.

Ghislaine is currently developing solutions to maintain girls in school by tackling gender-based obstacles such as period poverty. She led many projects through her non-profit advancing menstrual health and hygiene for girls in rural communities. She is also collaborating with the BAOBAB learning platform of the MasterCard Foundation as a mentor to support and guide young people in their leadership journey.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Bagula Alain Darell

Bagula Alain Darell is a human rights activist based in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Founder and Executive Director of WOKOVU WAY a national non-governmental organization currently supporting the education of over 300 orphaned children including some who are school age and others who are preschool age. He is a champion for engaging orphans in recreational

and creative activities, and youth empowerment through servant leadership. He advocates for providing psychosocial support to victims of massacres and wars in the east of the country since September 2016. Darell also works for a comprehensive approach to sex education programming for adolescents and young people with a special focus on the best practice of menstrual hygiene management by promoting the use of locally made reusable and washable sanitary pads.

He is also an advocate for gender equality and equity in the educational system of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Ghana

Amdiya Abdul Latiff

Amdiya Abdul Latiff is a multiple award-winning, menstrual equity advocate and a social innovator in eco-friendly reusable sanitary pads with over seven years of experience championing gender equity, the global SDGs, and community development in underserved areas of Ghana.

She is currently the founding Director of Eco-Me Africa and RuGirlz EMS, a social impact-driven organization that has achieved a community impact of over 5,000 women and girls and their families. She has distributed over 13,000 pads along with reproductive and menstrual health education and has since impacted the health and dignity of women and girls, created employment for 25 disadvantaged women in the value chain to combat Gender-Based Violence. She has also worked to prevent 1.3 million single-use disposable sanitary pads from ending up in landfills with a vision to combat period poverty, plastic waste, and the high unemployment rate in rural Ghana.

Amdiya's recent recognitions include receiving the Female-Led Green Business 2022 Award and the Yali Sustainability Excellence and Community Engagement Award, among others.

Kenya

Wamuyu Kuira

Wamuyu (Ivy) Kuira is the Founder of KEEPING A GIRL IN SCHOOL, a non-profit organization registered in Kenya in 2019, with an aim to create awareness on menstrual hygiene management by providing free sanitary products to girls in need, educating boys and men about periods, and fostering open discussions about menstruation. She is a lover of acting and theatre performance and a graduate from KCA University in Kenya where she pursued journalism and digital media.

Through Ivy's philanthropy, more than 20,000 girls have received sanitary towels donations in Kenya since 2019. Over the years she has been able to raise awareness about menstrual hygiene and stigmatization among more than 50,000 people, including girls and boys in Kenya.

Currently, together with her organization she is helping make reusable pads which will help sustain girls for two years.

Ivy was recognized internationally as a Menstrual Champion in Kenya, by the Lions Clubs International.

Liberia

Stephen P. Ben

Stephen P. Ben is an enthusiastic and impact-oriented founder, ambassador, and volunteer with over two years of experience in nonprofit leadership. After experiencing low self-confidence, discrimination, and social isolation due to a severe stutter from birth, Stephen developed a passion for advocacy and campaigning for a just world full of equity. He has worked tirelessly to empower marginalized communities and promote equal access to opportunities.

Stephen is currently an undergraduate student at the University of Liberia, pursuing a degree in Economics with a focus on Mathematics. He is committed to academic excellence and strives to make a positive impact in his community. Stephen embodies the values of resilience, discipline, honesty, and consistency in both his personal and professional endeavors. Overall, Stephen is a dedicated and compassionate leader who is committed to making a difference in his part of the world.

South Africa

Asonle Kotu

Asonle Kotu is a social entrepreneur and a menstrual health activist. She has experience in working for a community development centre and community college. She has worked in fundraising for non-governmental, non-profit and for CSI initiatives. Asonle transitioned from developmental work to the tech start up space through her public relations and marketing position for a software development company.

Asonle is the founder of FemConnect, an award-winning femtech startup that creates digital solutions for period poverty support and provides access to comprehensive SRHR telehealth services to achieve equality, access to diversity and quality healthcare services for all. Asonle served as the YouthLead Ambassador for South Africa in 2020 and YouthLead Ambassador advisor to the 2021 ambassadors. She is an alumni of the Academy of Women's Entrepreneurs and a Mandela Washington Fellow. Asonle is a recipient of the 2021 Meaningful Business100 award recognised as a leader dedicating her work to tackling the world's most pressing issues and helping achieve the UN Global Goals. Awarded the ICFP Youth Trailblazer Award for youth champions in the family planning and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SHRH) field. Asonle was named on the BBC100 Women list of inspiring and inspirational women in the world for 2022.

She is passionate about empowering girls, women, youth and communities by improving accessibility and equality of healthcare leaving no one behind through mentorship and support. Her dream is to ensure that through her work she can enable easy access to quality digital healthcare for SRHR services to reach 1 million girls in Sub-saharan Africa by 2030.

Tanzania

Hawa Kipilili

Hawa Kipilili is an experienced teacher and facilitator. She is the co-founder and program director of a nonprofit organization based in Tanzania. She is a mentor to hundreds of adolescent girls in various schools. Hawa is passionate about education and community development, she does her best in imparting proper information to students, teachers, and parents. She has trained both Tanzanian and international schools in pedagogy and instructional best practices for the past 12 years and has a research background in health and education with a focus in northern Tanzania. She has worked with multiple international and local research-based organizations and companies. She received her B.A. in Education at the University of Dar es Salaam and her post graduate studies were completed in International Education at the University of Nottingham, UK. She has also earned a certificate in Social-Behavioral Education from the CITI program. Hawa values dedication, hard-work, honesty and strong working relationships dedicated.

Ruth Meriki

Ruth Meriki is a community and social development professional, mentor to hundreds of girls, and a feminist who is very enthusiastic about the wellbeing of the girl and boy child. She is dedicated to ensuring girl children have equal opportunities to succeed in school. She has over 10 years of experience in business, community development research and projects. Her intervention programming efforts for girl children are driven by extensive field research with multinational teams across multiple communities.

She is the Founder and Executive Director at Elle Peut Naidim (EPN), a women-led non-governmental organization legally registered in July 2020, EPN advocates for girls' rights to education with the inclusion of boys. The initiative seeks to ensure the right to education is equally guaranteed without discrimination through improving the life of the girl child by enhancing access to education opportunities, strengthening child protection systems, facilitating access to better and affordable menstrual hygiene products (ending period poverty) and the provision of age- and context-specific menstrual health and hygiene education to girls, boys, mothers, fathers and teachers throughout Tanzania. EPN is also committed to addressing key challenges that prohibit young girls from reaching and excelling to their fullest potentials.

Lucy Achieng' Odiwa

Lucy Achieng' Odiwa is a 38 years old, Menstrual Health Management Advocate, Quality Health access Practitioner, Adolescent Girls SRHR Activist, Co- Founder & CEO, WomenChoice Industries, a social enterprise that manufactures and distributes low cost, affordable menstrual hygiene management Reusable sanitary towels "Salama Pads" to young women and girls from low resources settings in Tanzania. Ms Odiwa empowers socially disadvantaged women on MHM Model Business and Financial Skills to equip them as vendors of the reusable sanitary towels in their local community earning income with the sales of every pack of Salama Pads.

Ms. Odiwa holds a Diploma in Clinical Medicine, Bachelors in social sciences Public Administration. Ms Odiwa is the 1st place winner of the 2018 global SDGs and Her Competition for women micro-entrepreneurs helping to achieve the SDGs through their business operations, YALIRLCEA Alumnus, Youth Solutions Program alumnus and one of the 50 top-ranked solutions and featured in SDSN Youth's 2019 Youth Solutions Report. She is the current chairperson Tanga Platform Of Menstrual Health Management.

Uganda

Joanna Atukunda

Joanna Atukunda is a social worker by profession with a Bachelor of Science in Gender and Women Health. She is passionate about transformational leadership, quality education and women's health.

Joanna is the Founder and Team Leader of UPLIFT SLUM-AFRIKA, a non-profit organization that is aimed at equipping young adolescents in slum dwellings with comprehensive knowledge on sexual reproductive health rights and quality education. We organize training activities on adolescent education, menstrual hygiene and management, sexuality education, reproductive health rights and policies and how one can defend their rights. We also support a few students with school fees and requirements to enable them to remain in school.

Joanna is also the Co-founder and Administrator of League of Young Professionals Uganda, an organization aimed at improving the reading culture of young people in Uganda through encouraging a culture of reading among African readers. With a desire to support the quality and mindsets of youth leaders in Africa, the organization has been striving to practically nurture a new cadre of African leaders since 2016 through a formal leadership and mindset change program. The program practically focuses on three areas of improvement: African youth reading culture, mindset/attitude change, and leadership development.

She is an alumni of the Young African Leaders' Initiative (YALI), Regional Leadership Centre Nairobi East Africa Fellow, and Mandela Washington Fellow (MWF) 2021 Alumni. She is emerging as an inspiring young East African leader in public management.

Zambia

Banji Kasonde Nsama

Banji Kasonde Nsama is Legal Advisor and Media Coordinator for Donate a Pad Foundation from Lusaka, Zambia. She is the second born in the family of eight. She graduated from the National Institute of Public Administration with a Degree in Law. She is currently a Menstrual Hygiene Advocate with the interest of fighting period poverty in the communities around in Zambia. Banji's role in Donate a Pad is to ensure that all media engagements are up to date. She manages the dissemination of accurate information in relation to correct menstrual hygiene practices. Her role has helped the organization win two social media awards in 2021 and 2022 respectively for the best social media campaign. Her passion is to ensure that girls and women have access to appropriate menstrual hygiene products through sensitization and provision of menstrual products.