

**REPORT
SANITARY PADS DONATION –
HANDING OVER CEREMONY**

By

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The trip to western Kenya to supply sanitary pads to girls in class 7 and 8 came abruptly. I was asked by Prof. Ruth Oniang'o aka Mummy to go on her behalf since she was expected during the same time elsewhere. I accepted the challenge to represent her as her daughter and ROA (Rural Outreach Africa). To be honest, I was both honored and nervous. I was well aware that both my language skills in Swahili and mother tongue were appalling so I was going to try to figure out a way to relate and reach out to these young ladies.

I flew out on October 11th to Kisumu and was picked up by my uncle who drove me to see some of my relatives who had been bereaved before finally arriving at his home. The whole entire trip, all that rested on my mind was how I was going to talk or what I was going to say. I had never travelled to western alone without my mother and this was going to be the first time. I left it in God's hands and intended to go with the flow. We were to visit one school in Emukangu then proceed to Eshisango where five other schools were to congregate there at the church to receive the sanitary pads. It was going to be a long arduous day, but I was looking forward to it. I ate well, communicated with the field coordinator Doris Anjawa about logistics and timelines for the following day before I retired for the night.

I took off with my Uncle in the morning and made our first stop at the church nursery to give out crayons, pencils and chocolates. I was so happy to see these little kids who were busy learning and I talked and encouraged them to keep up the good work.



We then proceeded to Emukangu Primary school and were welcomed by the headteacher. ROA was represented by Doris, Andala and I and we were able to give a small talk of encouragement since the class 8 were going to sit their final exams in just a few weeks. We also stated the other purpose of our visit and how it pertained to the girls. We were then able to have the boys leave while we talked to the girls about the importance of hygiene and why we were there. Many girls skip school when their monthly menstrual cycle is in full swing.

This impedes their performance in school and our lesson to these girls was that with these pads, they can still participate in school and not



fall behind. We had a total of 99 packets of pads to hand out and we were able to deliver them seamlessly. We took pictures with the girls and after a small treat of soda we left the school and proceeded to Eshisango Primary school. On my way to our next stop, I felt a level of encouragement. It went better than I had expected and the fact that we were there to do a noble thing for these students left me feeling very encouraged and pleased.

We arrived at Eshisango Primary in good time and we were welcomed by the Headteacher. We had a total of 376 sanitary packets left to hand out to Eshisango Primary, Mwiyeanga Primary, Eshikomere Primary, Ematioli Primary and Eshibimbi Primary. We encouraged the students about to sit exams and then proceeded to the church to assemble all the students from all the afore mentioned schools to distribute pads. Their teachers were able to keep them organized as we moved swiftly from school to school. At the end we had a picture session. The rain came down at the tail end of the day and that was a blessing. It was successful and I was so thankful for that. The girls were very happy about their new gifts and a reason to stay in school despite mother nature. My take away from this experience was realizing how much we take for granted and how much we need to empower these young students to aim high and aim higher instead of settling. I was also impressed at how comfortable the male teachers played a role in the talk and importance for the event. They did not shy away. Given another opportunity I would go again to do it again. What I learnt from this experience was an eye opener of what an amazing mother I have and how she's able to reach out to folks in the village. When people hear of ROA they come out in droves. She believes in them and has kept a constant presence in their communities. I found that to be very powerful, noble and a special gift. I have a higher admiration for her work and it was my honor to support and assist in this capacity.





