

VASIKANA PROJECT

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19



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOCAL IMMIGRANT WOMAN, FORMER BEAUTY QUEEN AND NOW PHD CANDIDATE WORKS TO KEEP GIRLS IN SCHOOL

CINCINNATI, OH — Vasikana Project, a local immigrant-owned non-profit dedicated to empowering girls through puberty education, revealed its new brand and announced the launch of a fundraising campaign that includes the publication of a long-awaited empowerment Journal for women and girls.

Through Journal sales, Vasikana Project will be able to provide its clients with a self-sustaining framework to manage their menstrual health and emotional well-being that will allow them to stay focused, and not miss out on school because of their monthly period. The Project worked with a local publisher to make the Journal available on Amazon and worldwide beginning August 17. The date is also the Launch date and will feature renowned Activist and Ambassador, Dr. Yewande Austin. While in Cincinnati, Dr. Austin will conduct youth empowerment workshops at local schools and universities. She is open to further engagements and can be reached via Vasikana Project's press office at 513.818.6715 or clarastrode@outlook.com.

“When you purchase the Journal, for yourself, your Circle of Friends, or whomever you'd like to bless with an empowerment Journal, the proceeds go directly to the publication and distribution of a Puberty Education Handbook for Girls. In the handbook is a reusable template to create a sanitary pad using commonplace materials”, said Zvisinei Dzapasi Mamutse, Founder of Vasikana Project.

Vasikana Project is a non-profit organization empowering girls by providing puberty education and safe, dignified ways for young girls to manage their periods. It is particularly interested in assisting girls from Zimbabwe because of the country's dire needs and is where the Founder's story starts.

Dzapasi, a former Ms. Zimbabwe runner-up and Secretary of Cincinnati Sister Cities (Harare), founded the non-profit after discussions with her husband, Honest Mamutse, and subsequent discussions with her six sisters in memory of their pioneering Mother whose legacy of initiatives that empowered women is unparalleled. In the late '80s, way before women sexual empowerment was acceptable in Zimbabwe, Mbuya (granny) Dzapasi, as she was affectionately known, rode on her bicycle from one homestead to another, talking to women about safe sex and contraceptives, giving women control over their bodies.

Vasikana Project continues that legacy except, now women empowerment is widely accepted, but the girl child and the taboos on menstruation, made worse by economic woes have threatened to roll back years of progress. More and more girls drop out of school because of their monthly period, leading to early marriage and inadequate education of girls.

“Our Solution to this problem was a call to all women, thus the title of the journal – *I Call on you Sis...* It is a call to all women and their Circle of Sisters to help underprivileged girls in Zimbabwe better manage their lives through the provision of puberty education. The Journal goes further by providing a space for women to reflect on their relationships with one another and to call each other as they go through life. No woman or girl should ever have to go through life without the support of another woman. We are more powerful when we band together and see each other through life's trials, tribulations and glory”, said Dzapasi. “When you buy the Journal, for yourself, or your circle of Sisters, you are supporting those girls seating in the corner of a hut waiting out their period because all proceeds will go towards the girls,” Dzapasi concluded.

It is a plea that comes from the heart. Dzapasi, a current Ph.D. candidate and practicing Nurse Practitioner, knows all too well the struggle for success. Her story as an Immigrant in Cincinnati and subsequent success drives her need to make life better for other girls, starting with the most basic need – an education.



WWW.VASIKANAPROJECT.ORG

Our Story

We have over 10 years of activism in empowering the girl child. We strive to do this by providing menstrual health needs for girls to stay in school.



ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Vasikana Project is a non-profit organization empowering girls by providing puberty education and safe, dignified ways for young girls to manage their periods.

We strive to do this by:

- Publishing a **puberty education booklet** that includes a cut-out pattern and instructions to create their own reusable pads.
- Providing **workshops on general hygiene**, breast self-exams, body image, and building self-confidence.
- Demystifying menstruation and **eradicating some of the taboos** centered around the subject.
- Creating **self-sustainability projects** for women to sew their own reusable pads.
- Tuition scholarship program for girls.

WHAT WE CAN DO

- Build community
- Fundraise for schools
- Promote menstrual health
- Help raise school fees
- Help with administrative needs for schools

WHO WE WORK WITH

- Schools in Zimbabwe
- Communities in the USA, UK and S.A.
- Non-governmental organizations
- Governmental organizations
- Families
- Young women

STATS

2K+

facebook likes

—

5000+

Menstrual products
disbursed

—

200+

number of girls served

—

11

volunteer team
members

I Call on You Sis...

What is *I Call on You Sis...*?

A Journal to remind us of how powerful women relationships are in renewing strengths. In a world filled with so much loneliness, depression, suicide and jealousies, it is important to be mindful of our response when called upon.

I CALL ON YOU SIS... is a call to women, to empower not only themselves and their Circle of Sisters, but to help underprivileged girls in Zimbabwe better manage their lives through the provision of puberty education, and here is how:

I Call on You Sis...

Supporting Puberty Education

When a purchase of the Journal is made, the proceeds go directly to the publication and distribution of a Puberty Education Handbook for Girls.

The booklet explores all issues related to the onset of menstruation - emotional, physical, medical, economic and is designed with a template to create reusable sanitary pads so no girl ever has to miss school because of her period!

Journal Available for Pre-order July 1st, from braughlerbooks.com

DR. YEWANDE AUSTIN

keynote Speaker

From MTV to the historic Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Yewande's socially charged music has taken center stage with musical icons from the Black Eyed Peas to Maroon 5, but it is her work as an award-winning lecturer, social activist and honorary U. S. Cultural Ambassador that has become her greatest achievement. Today, this recipient of a 2019 Honorary Doctorate in Humanitarianism, 2018 African Women in Leadership "Phenomenal Woman of Worth" Award, 2018 African Global Chamber of Commerce "Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation" Award and 2017 President Barack Obama Lifetime Achievement Award is recognized as an international expert in strategic diversity leadership, multidisciplinary education, social responsibility and youth development.

For the past 14 years, this social impact leader's award-winning programs have empowered clients with competence skills that promote diversity and inclusion, leadership and social responsibility from the classroom and physical examination room to the boardroom. Under her capacity building consultancy, the Global Institute for Diversity and Change, she has been credited with transforming over 3,000 academic institutions, government agencies and non-profit organizations through evidence-based strategies. Through a combination of education, sustainable skill development and the arts, her humanitarian organization, the Change Rocks Foundation, has taught over 250,000 vulnerable youth, advocates and educators in 20 countries from North and Latin America to Europe and 14 countries across Africa how to create sustainable solutions that reduce poverty and social injustice.

Among many notable accomplishments as an internationally renowned educator, lecturer and keynote speaker, the United Nations recently asked Ms. Austin to present her sustainable community model for Boko Haram conflict survivors at the "High Level Summit on the Repatriation of the Diaspora". The first rehabilitation model of its kind in Abuja, Nigeria, Alheri Village will provide residents with housing, job training, healthcare and other critical services that promote social and economic independence. For the past 11 years, Ms. Austin has served as a consultant to the U. S. State Department under which she has produced conflict resolution, health education, youth empowerment and economic development programs across the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Botswana, Namibia and Malawi. Yewande recently completed her second State Department assignments (2017 and 2019) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda where she expanded professional development programs for government officials and civic engagement programs for vulnerable youth, former child soldiers and indigenous leaders.

During her 2014-2017 tenure at Virginia Commonwealth University, Ms. Austin became the first Diversity Lecturer-in-Residence in the Office of the Vice-President for Health Sciences in the institution's 177-year history. This residency produced HumanCare – the country's first recognized diversity healthcare curriculum for pre-health and professional health science students which was developed and taught by Austin. In 2016, Ms. Austin was awarded with a Globe Faculty Fellowship by VCU's Office of Global Education – one of only 25 Peace Corp Prep programs in America. During this fellowship, Yewande created The Art of Change – a social entrepreneurship course that she conducted concurrently with the University of Botswana online. With the success of this 3-credit class, Ms. Austin directed and created the curriculum for the department's first study abroad program in The Republic of Botswana. This achievement marked the office's second trip to Africa since its inception.

Ms. Austin was a CNN Hero nominee in 2017, 2014 and 2013 for her tireless international humanitarian efforts. And she recently launched the 2019 Nawo Cultural Tour and Economic Development Summit which will lead its first delegation to Nigeria, September 27 – October 7, 2019. This professional development trip was created to foster collaboration between American and African industry leaders through cultural exchange, social engagement and economic partnership. It is this extraordinary mission that is inspiring a legion of everyday heroes to change the world.

For more information: www.globalinstituteforchange.com and www.changerocksfoundation.com



I Call on You Sis...

By Zvisinei Dzepasí Mamutse

THE JOURNAL LAUNCH EVENT

SPECIAL GUEST
DR. YEWANDE AUSTIN
ARTIST, ACTIVIST, AMBASSADOR

THE FUELED COLLECTIVE
AUGUST 17, 2019
5 - 7 P.M.

VASIKANAPROJECT.ORG
FOR TICKETS





●●● GET IN TOUCH ●●●

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I Call on You Sis...

*in my loss and the pain
becomes too hard to bear,
and tears no longer fall.*

*You, my Sis, help me to
realize that those we love do
not go away, but continue to
walk beside us, unseen.*

- I Call on You Sis,, -