

Background:

A survey was carried out to find out the rate of girls dropping out of school due to lack of sanitary towels (pads) conducted by Visionary Lady International and partnership with Global Bridge Network from Japan. The target area was Agule County in Pallisa district, a sample study was made from three schools; Canan nursery & Juniou Academy, Muruk Primary School and Agule primary school. Due to the introduction of universal primary and secondary education, the school enrolment levels have overtime increased. However, the dropout rate of girls is much more compared to the boys. One of the major challenges identified that causes the dropout of girls is lack of pads to use during their monthly menstrual periods. Most of the girls in the rural areas use clothes which are equivalent to rugs and this is harmful to their health. Other girls use mattress pieces which are uncomfortable and get filled up easily. Most girls also reported being bullied by their male schoolmates whenever they are in their periods because the blood leaks and gets onto their school uniforms which makes them hate school, hence dropping out at an early age.

This situation has also contributed to early and unplanned marriages where the girls opt to get married at a tender age because they no longer attend school, or expecting for provision from the husband. This has enhanced the vicious cycle of poverty because these girls always lack parenting skills, don't have a proper source of livelihood and in most cases end up being violated by their husbands. Otherwise, such girls force to child labor or prostitution which cause expansion of HIV or other diseases. The illiterate women are always vulnerable either domestic or in society thus easily face domestic violence making it hard for them to be independent. Therefore, it is very important for the girls to be educated.

Interview

The survey started with an interview with deputy RDC and the LC 5 vice chair person Mr. Onono Christopher at the local government office in Pallisa town. They welcomed the idea of menstrual hygiene trainings, training girls on how to make pads using the locally available material within their reach and also providing them with the reusable pads if possible as a way of encouraging girls to enroll and stay in school. The LC5 emphasized on the raising numbers of teenage pregnancies and early marriages due to most girls dropping out of school because of lack of necessary materials such as sanitary pads (in this case a girl starts her periods and because she doesn't have pads, periods leak out and they are laughed at by other school mates), scholastic materials, food, clothes etc. "Because of the household problems that mothers are minimized by

their husbands they do most household works therefore they do not have time to talk to their girls about their health issues, Poverty being the main cause of girls dropping out of school as parents cannot provide for the children's needs”.



(Mr. Onono Christopher (LC5 Chair person) Welcoming and showing support to visionary lady international as being the only organisation directly working to support the girl child and encouraging girls to stay in school)

NB: After carrying out a survey from three different schools, Canan nursery & Juniouir Academy was selected as the target school to start with incase funds were received, this was because the school is supporting many orphans therefore making it most vulnerable than the rest. Agule Primary School is a government school and Muruk primary school had few girls enrolled and most of them were in the lower classes. This finding therefore justifies the selection of the target school.

Head master and a senior lady of Canan nursery & Juniouir Academy School



The interview with the Headmaster of Canan nursery & Junour Academy showed that there are many orphans in the school hence making their financial situation very difficult, the girls are always struggling to survive and to get their necessary needs. He said there was a problem of Water shortage as one of the challenges thus the girls are often sent back home to change/clean themselves or rather they are given permission to be absent when they have periods because they cannot afford to buy pads. We try to stop boys from bulling them but it is not easy to stop them. Average girls drop out in a term due to menstruation, embracement when boys bullied them, and lack of school fees. We don`t know how to give them hygiene training and sex education. If you can support to train us, we will be willing to take such training.

The head teacher said that average 5 girls had dropped out of school due to the problem of lack of pads, boys laugh at them and they feel embraced and ashamed.

Some of the Girls attending school



During the interview with the girls, some of them said “there are moment when I start my periods and all I can think of, maybe I should get pregnant so I don’t have to go through this hustle and embracement from friends but then another thought comes in, I have to stay in school”. They said most times during their periods they are absent from school because they don’t have pads to use during that time, when they use clothes in most cases their uniforms get stained and boys make fun of them so they decide to stay home until it’s finished. One of the challenges they face is lack of information about menstruation and menstrual hygiene, not even the elders or parents talk to them about it and Lack of water in schools. However, all of them value education and want to go to continue school without being absence.

Interview with the Boys



The boys appreciate girls being in school; however they don't get sex education so most of them are ignorant about the different puberty changes that occur mostly in girls. They also admitted that they laugh at and bully the girls when they are in their periods and the uniform/ dress gets stained. After the interviews, We asked them to promise not bully girls anymore and they agreed.

Girls dropping out of the school



The different girls interviewed all were faced by the same issues, they dropped out of school because they didn't have or couldn't afford buying pads, when at school boys

bullied them and they couldn't stand the humiliation so decided to drop out. One of the girls said "no one taught her about menstruation in school or home, it just happened at school one time and my friend told me what to do but other colleagues laughed at me, people bullying me when I had periods, I have never gone back to school again". Because of poverty, they didn't have scholastic materials, however, they like schooling and if they have pads, they would love to go back to school and their parents said they want to let them back but cannot afford to buy pads or school materials.

Elderly

The elders however have a different perspective on how adolescents, they said boys and girls used to attend separate school, menstruation was a secret, public wouldn't know about it, it was never talked about. The girls then used cotton wool and old cotton clothes as pads. They emphasized that parents should be educated or trained on how to talk to their teenage children so that the same message is passed on to their children but since they are not taught, they don't know what to teach the children.



In conclusion therefore, there is need for sex education in schools, menstruation should be talked about publically and boys sensitized and encouraged not to laugh at girls. If girls are able to manage proper hygiene during and their periods, enrollment in classes would increase, thus improving the overall education system and ultimately the development of the nation. This initiative is one step in helping to achieve the goal of keeping the girls in school.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of School	MURUK PRIMARY SCHOOL
Name of Head Masters	
Q1: How many girls and boys are in your school?	280 STUDENTS
Q2: What's the rate of drop outs per term or in year?	HIGH
Q3: What's the reason of them to drop out?	LACK OF BASIC NECESSITIES SUCH AS SANITARY TOWELS (No money to buy pads)
Q4: How do you support the girls who have started their periods?	We teach them on the basic information, how to manage the situation.
Q 5: What are some of the challenges you face?	We don't have the materials to give the girls, no water in school
Q6: How do you handle the challenges?	We send them back home to clean up
Q7: Any expectations?	Request you to train the girls on menstrual hygiene <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide the girls with pads - Educate the boys too - Provide them with knickers or under garments
Name of Teacher.....	Amongin Sylvia
Q1:	150 Girls

How many girls are in the school	
Q2:How many are 9yrs & above	100 girls
Q3: How is the attendance of girls compared to boys in your class?	Fair
Q4: What's the reason for the absentees?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boys laugh at them when they start their periods and they feel embarrassed and stay at home
Q5: How do you support girls who have started their periods?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talk to them
Q6: Do you teach the pupils about menstrual hygiene?	Yes, we tell them that at a certain age you will start your periods
Q7: What challenges do you face when handling girls with menstruation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We don't have the material to give the girls - No water in school - Bad attitude
Q8: How do you handle the challenges?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Send them home to change
Q9: How would you want us to help this girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give the girls pads - Train them about menstruation hygiene
Girls	

Q1: What's your name?	ALUKU JOYCE
Q2: What's your age?	16yrs
Q3: Do you like to go to school?	Yes
Q4: Have you started your period?	Yes
Q5: What are your challenges you are facing?	Have no pads, use old clothes
Q6: How do your parents and teachers help?	No
Q7: What do you feel about your menstruation? Do you like it?	It's ok
Q8: What is your expectation from parents, teachers and VLI?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide me with pads - teach me on how to make those ones that are thick so that I don't stain my clothes - talk to the boys to stop bulling and laughing at us

Name of School	CANAN NURSERY & JUNIOUR ACADEMY
Name of Head Masters	MR. OPOLOT ELLY +256-776-658-590
Q1: How many girls and boys are in your school?	280 GIRLS AND 160 BOYS Primary 6-7, 120girls and 20boys
Q2:	5GIRLS DROP OUT IN A TERM

What's the rate of drop outs per term or in year?	
Q3: What's the reason of them to drop out?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DUE TO MENSTRATION, LACK OF PADS - EMBARACCESSEMENT - SCHOOL FEES
Q4: How do you support the girls who have started their periods?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TALK TO THE PUPILS - BUY SOME PADS WHEN WE GET SOME FUNDS - DO FOLLOW UPS ON THE GIRLS WHO HAVE LEFT SCHOOL BY TALKING TO THE PARENTS AND GIRLS.
Q 5: What are some of the challenges you face?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LACK OF FUNDS/ Income - Lack of water in school -
Q6: How do you handle the challenges?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Borrow money /funds and buy pads for the orphans - Buy water
Q7: Any expectations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide pads to the school - Sponsor the orphans - Provide some scholastic materials - Build some classroom expectations
Name of Teacher.....Amoit Josephine (Senior lady)	
Q1: How many girls are in the school	120 girls
Q2:How many are 9yrs & above	
Q3:	Fair

How is the attendance of girls compared to boys in your class?	
Q4: What's the reason for the absentees?	4girls dropped out this term, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2girls got ashamed when the boys laughed at them when they stained their uniforms and never came back again - 2orphans didn't have school fees
Q5: How do you support girls who have started their periods?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talk to them, - Advise them to use cotton wool and pads to those who can afford
Q6: Do you teach the pupils about menstrual hygiene?	Yes
Q7: What challenges do you face when handling girls with menstruation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of pads to help them at school - No school fees for orphans - Lack of scholastic materials
Q8: How do you handle the challenges?	Talk to the pupils
Q9: How would you want us to help this girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need pads
Girls	
Q1: What's your name?	AGUTI HELLEN, AKURUT AGNES, ANYAIT BETTY, MONGO KEVIN
Q2: What's your age?	14yrs, 14yrs, 16yrs,15yrs respectively
Q3: Do you like to go to	Yes

school?	
Q4: Have you started your period?	Yes
Q5: What are your challenges you are facing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cramps Pains - Embarrassment - Some girls are orphans - No scholastic materials - Boys laugh at us - Have no knickers - Some use cotton wool, old clothes, pads
Q6: How do your parents and teachers help?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talk to boys to stop laughing but they don't listen
Q7: What do you feel about your menstruation? Do you like it?	<p>It's God given, nothing to do.</p> <p>It is ok</p>
Q8: What is your expectation from parents, teachers and VLI?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers should advise us about menstruation, should also punish boys who laugh at girls - Parents should provide us with money to buy the necessities ie. Pads, cotton wool, knickers - VLI bring us pads, knickers, clothes, scholastic material, train us on menstruation hygiene - Give us soap
Boys	
Q1: What's your name?	Onyas Jeremiah, Onalla Sam, Okiror Martin, Otai Abraham
Q2: What's your age?	14yrs, 15yrs, 15yrs, 15yrs respectively
Q3: Do you like to go to school?	Yes
Q4: Do you know what the	Yes

differences between girls and boys are?	
Q5: What do you understand by adolescence?	Puberty stage, where both girl and boys get changes in their lives
Q6: Do you know what menstruation is?	Yes
Q7: What do you think of menstruation?	God created it for women
Q8: What do you do when you find girls in their menstruation?	Laugh at her
Q9: Do you bully or laugh at girls in their menstruation?	Yes
Q10: Do you think menstruation is bad?	No
Q11: Do you have sex education in school and home?	No
Q12: YES, what have you learned? No, what do you want to learn/would you want it taught?	- Sex education in school
Girls who drop out from school (1)	

Q1: What's your name?	Amoding Barbra
Q2: What's your age?	16yrs
Q3: The reasons of dropping out from school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bulling from boys - No pads - Lack of Scholastic materials - Have no clothes and knickers
Q4: What was your experience in school?	I stained my uniform, boys and girls laughed and bullied me, I was very embarrassed and ashamed, couldn't go back to face my schoolmates
Q5: Did you like being in school?	I enjoyed being in school
Q6: How did you handle on your menstruation?	The first time I didn't know anything, no one talked me about it.
Q7: Do you want to go back to school?	Yes, if I can get the good pads
Q8: What are your expectations/How would you want to be helped?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give me pads - Give me knickers - Give me clothes

Girls who drop out from school (2) (2 girls)	
Q1: What's your name?	Achipa Loy
Q2: What's your age?	14yrs
Q3: The reasons of dropping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No money - Boys laugh at me from school

out from school?	
Q4: What was your experience in school?	Liked schooling, although I had no pads, I used clothes, I would wash and iron before wearing(making a pad to wear)
Q5: Did you like being in school?	Yes
Q6: How did you handle on your menstruation?	I used old clothes, I would go back home from school to go and clean up and change
Q7: Do you want to go back to school?	Yes
Q8: What are your expectations/How would you want to be helped?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Send me back to school - Provide Pads - Provide me with school fees - Provide soap - Provide clothes and knickers(under garments) - Give scholastic materials

Girls who drop out from school (3)	
Q1: What's your name?	ACHOM STELLA
Q2: What's your age?	16YRS
Q3: The reasons of dropping out from school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BOYS BULLING ME - HEAVY FLOW - LACK OF SCHOOL FEES - LACK OF PADS,CLOTHES
Q4: What was your experience in school?	ONE DAY I STAINED MY UNIFORM AND I WAS BULLIED

Q5: Did you like being in school?	YES
Q6: How did you handle on your menstruation?	I WENT BACK HOME
Q7: Do you want to back to school?	YES
Q8: What are your expectations/How would you want to be helped?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GUIDANCE AND ADVISE ON MENSTRATION ISSUES - PROVIDE ME WITH PADS

Parents	
Name	George William Akora (M)
Q1: Do you have teenage kids?	Yes
Q2: Have you taught them sex education?	No
Q3: Have you explained to your kids about menstruation?	No
Q4: How do you support your girls during menstruation?	Tell them to use old clothes
Q5: How do you want the community or others to help?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide them with pads - Take them back to school - Provide them with necessities

Elderly	
Name	Mr. Okanya AnthonyAge. 77yrs.....+256-754-707-665
What are some of the Experiences you have had with teenage? (menstruation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth don't respect themselves that is why there is a lot of early pregnancies in the communities - Because of poverty the young teenagers have resorted to cross generational relationships
What do you think of the current life style of teenagers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents should be educated or trained on how to talk to their teenage children - Parents are not taught, don't know what to teach the children

Elderly	
Name	Mrs. Okia Edith 77 years old
What are some of the Experiences you have had with teenage? (menstruation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They don't want listen to elders, in our days we used to be clean, bathing and washing of clothes was a must. - They don't mind about the secrecy of menstruation
What do you think of the current life style of teenagers?	They are wreck lace that's why they end up messing up causing early pregnancies. -