

JICA Monthly Report November 2022

IMPROVING SCHOOL'S EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS BY ADDRESSING MENSTRUAL HYGIENE CHALLENGES

<Activities conducted>

1. Radio talk show in Mubende
2. Air Spot Messages to raise awareness on support for girls' education and increase on reusable sanitary pad users in all the 3 target districts
3. Printing of MHM booklets and Teacher's training manual in all the 3 target districts
4. Delivery of sewing machines in the 10 project schools in Mubende
5. Pad making in Schools in Butambala
6. Community awareness in Butambala
7. Happy pad promotion Centre in Wakiso
8. Production of face masks at the Happy-pad Promotion Centre in Wakiso

1. Radio talk show in Mubende

One hour radio talk show was conducted at Luna Fm in Mubende on 18/11/2022. The community was reminded about the need to support adolescent girls especially those that cannot afford sanitary material so that they can comfortably stay at school. The major talking point was about proper menstrual management, educating the girl child, the pad making training that will be conducted in the 10 target schools on reusable pad making, their usage and how to keep them clean. Also talked about the sewing machines that were delivered in the respective schools. Listeners were reminded that the pad making training will be conducted after the Ebola situation has stabilized.



2. Air Spot Messages to raise awareness on support for girls' education and increase on reusable sanitary pad users

Spot messages about Menstrual Hygiene Management, girls' education and reusable sanitary pad are aired as follows;

- Mubende via Luna FM 6 times a day.
- Wakiso via Voice of Kiryagonja 10 times a day.
- Butambala aired 11 times at Voice of Butende and 10 times at Voice of Kikambwe.

3. Printing of MHM Booklets and Teacher's Training Resource Tools

There 300 copies of the MHM Booklet and 20 copies of the Teacher's Training Resource tool that were printed on the 28/11/2022. They will be ready for distribution when schools open in February 2023. (Butambala)

Likewise, a total of 400 copies of MHM booklets and 40 copies of the Teacher's Training Resource tools were printed for the districts of Mubende and Wakiso.

	
<p>Printed copies of MHM Booklets</p>	<p>Printed Copies of Teacher's Training Resource tool</p>

4. Delivery of sewing machines and MHM T-shirts in the 10 project schools in Mubende

On 10-11/11/2022, sewing machines were delivered in the respective project schools in the presence of the teachers, identified tailors, MHM club members and other interested students. T-shirts were also distributed to the MHM club members. Participants were promised to receive the reusable sanitary pad making training when term one commences next year.

		
<p>Kabowa P/S receive the sewing machine</p>	<p>St Mary's Gwanika P/S as they receive the sewing machine</p>	<p>St Mary's Kiyita P/S receive the machine</p>
		
<p>Sewing machine delivery at Kasasa P/S</p>	<p>CAWODISA P/S receives the machine</p>	<p>Handover of the machine to Dyangoma P/s</p>

5. Pad making in Schools in Butambala

Due to the Ebola outbreak in the country, schools closed for holidays on 25/11/2022 earlier than the national school calendars. Project activities did not commence as planned since there was a shift of school programming. However, the team received communication from four primary schools including Bule, Ntolomwe, Nkokoma and Lwamasaka Primary schools who indicated they had started theory of pad making shortly before closure.

6. Community Awareness in Butambala

On the 26/11/2022, team engaged 124 children from different primary schools in Ngando Sub County at Budinse Memorial School. Out of the total 124 children, 56 were boys and 68 girls. Among these, 8 boys and 24 girls attend three of the project schools including Lwamasaka, Butende and Butalunga primary schools respectively. 92 children came from other non-target schools. Team conducted a one-hour Sexuality and Reproductive Health session in collaboration with Butambala Women in Development (BUWODEV), a local community-based organization. Children were mobilized for a 3-day event where we share life experiences with orphans and vulnerable children offering relief, counseling and guidance. We discussed puberty in terms of body changes, responsibility to protect each other, boys support for girls especially during menstruation was a key message and girls were encouraged to practice proper hygiene during their puberty.

Children from non-targeted schools were more reserved than their colleagues who came from the 3 target schools. They started opening up mostly at a time when a female facilitator from BUWODEV was conducting the session and when they were grouped into smaller clusters.

“You told us that a girl who does not menstruate by 16 years is sick but I have my friend who menstruated at 18 years. Is she normal?” asked one of the girls. In response, the facilitator explained that when menstruation delays, one should talk to an adult or see a doctor.

On 28th November 2022, 50 guardians (40 Female, 10 Male) were engaged and reminded of their responsibility in supporting adolescent girls during menstruation by endeavoring to provide sanitary material and emotional support for those at menarche. They were urged to create an environment where children can freely open up discussions with them. This was after discovering that children were not open during the counseling sessions held the previous days.



Project Team during the SRH session conducted in collaboration with Butambala Women in Development



Boys grouped together undertaking MHM and SRH discussions



Children grouped by age, undertaking training on personal hygiene



Session on body changes and puberty



Sensitization of guardians about proper MHM and their responsibility over girls on

7. Happy pad promotion Centre in Wakiso

A total of 28 pads were produced this month and 262 packaging bags. No students were trained due to early closure of schools as it was instructed by the government as one of the means to fight against Ebola. 9 outsiders from the community are being trained at the promotion centre. 3 pairs of the re-usable sanitary pads were sold so far but hoping to sell more as people get used to them. This will be achieved through shop-to-shop visits in addition to engaging persons in community gatherings, visiting female saloons among others.

	
<p>Seated on the right: a male parent inquiring about bringing 5 girls and 1 boy to start training in reusable sanitary pads during holidays; Standing is SORAK programmes managers and seated on the right are the pad centre volunteer tailor and supervisor.</p>	<p>Packaging bags produced at the pad Centre</p>

8. Production of face masks at the Happy-pad Promotion Centre in Wakiso

There 500 face masks that were produced at the promotion Centre due to Ebola pandemic and Covid-19. People were encouraged to put on face masks to prevent and help fight the diseases. A total of 155 masks were distributed to children in Wakiso. All made masks are not for sale and we are to distribute them free of charge. More production will continue in between the months of December 2022 and January 2023. More distribution will be made to project schools in Mubende during when schools open for next year 2023.

Following the Presidential address on 2nd December 2022 on health issues in the country, it was reported that 50 cases of COVID-19 omicron type is recorded daily. The president called up all the public to continue observing standard operating procedures (SOPs)



Face masks produced at the promotion Centre

Positive influence

- Members of the community in Nansana municipality are now familiar with the spot message especially in the areas near Voice of Kiryagonja community radio stations. These areas include; Kiryagonja, Kasalirwe, Kirinnyabigo, Lwadda-Kyondo, Najjamba and Nasse (Wakiso)

- Learners from the 3 project schools responded better than other children from the community during the SRH session that was conducted. This indicated improvement in MHM, and SRH knowledge. (Butambala)
- Collaboration with another community- based group helped us measure MHM information gaps for children in non-targeted schools. Guardians were encouraged to open up and invite their children to share health and puberty related issues (Butambala)
- Listeners appreciated SORAK for delivering sewing machines in the respective project schools and the wonderful information about proper menstrual management and Ebola provided during the radio talk show (Mubende)
- Participants including learners and teachers were excited to receive the sewing machine which shall be used for making reusable sanitary pads and showed interest to welcome the pad making training that will be conducted when schools resume (Mubende)
- Community members appreciated the quality of reusable sanitary pads produced at the promotion Centre. This was evidenced during marketing and selling of the 3 pairs of sanitary pads. (Wakiso)

Challenges

- School programs were adjusted such that schools can break off much earlier than before as ordered by the ministry of education. This was due to the outbreak of Ebola hence this affected some activities that were planned like monitoring of school facilities which was supposed to be conducted this month in all the 3 respective districts, also affected training of students in sanitary pad making in Mubende
- Learners had no reading material after the previous version of MHM booklets was withdrawn (Butambala)
- Ebola outbreak in Mubende and associated lockdown from 16th October to 17th December disorganized school study program, so was project activities. Schools were closed on 25th November, this was earlier than planned.

Recommendations

- School monitoring of facilities in all the 3 respective districts should be done as soon as schools resume next year in February 2023.
- Engagement of learners from other schools outside our target schools can create more awareness.
- Engaging other community groups to participate in the project for bigger impact.