

## JICA Monthly Report January 2023

### 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. Happy pad promotion Centre in Wakiso
4. Follow up on the two project schools in Mubende (Kiyita and Christ the King) to check on the progress of their unfinished facilities including washroom and toilet
5. Preparing new opening promotion Center in Butambala
6. Online Training in Butambala

#### 1. Radio talk show in Mubende

One hour radio talk show was conducted at Luna FM in Kibalinga, Mubende on 19/01/2023. Community members were 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 how to ensure a friendly MHM environment both at home and at school since schools are resuming soon. The talk show took place in the presence of the Youth Councilor Kibalinga who appreciated SORAK for the great work towards empowering the girl child to keep in school through addressing menstrual changes.



SORAK Director and Project Officer educating the community through the radio talk show

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

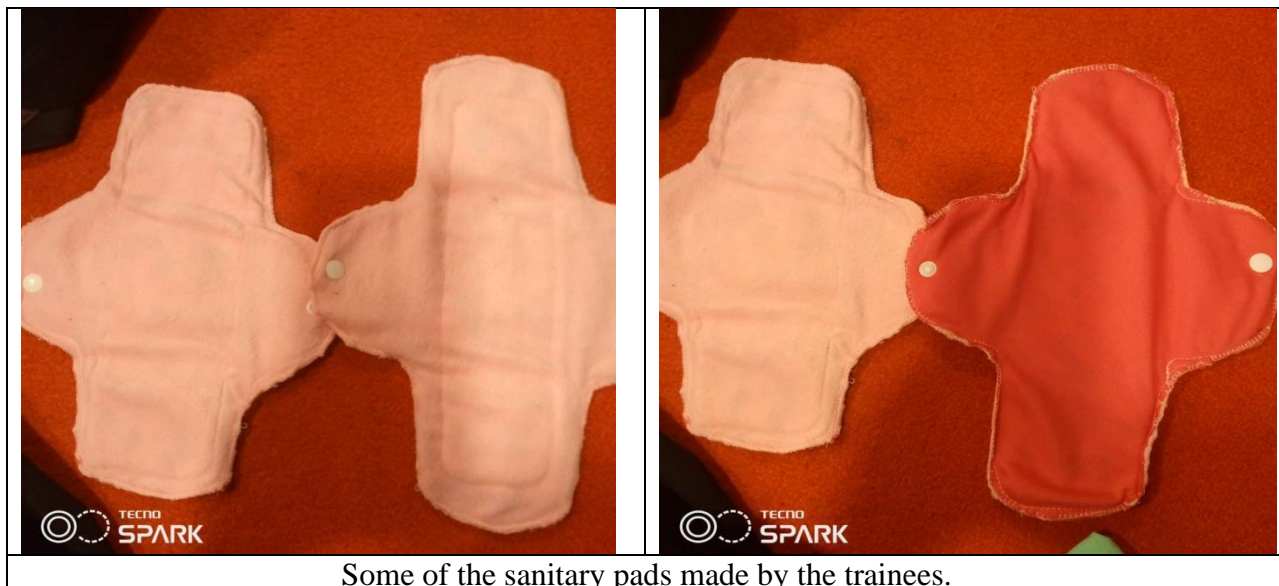
Spot messages about Menstrual Hygiene Management, girls' education and reusable sanitary pad are aired as follows;

- Mubende via Luna FM 6 times a day.
- Wakiso via Voice of Kiryagonja 10 times a day.

- Butambala, 11 spot messages were aired at Voice of Kikambwe and 10 aired at Voice of Butende.

### 3. Happy pad promotion Centre in Wakiso

The four girls that were enrolled in December kept at the pad Centre until 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023 when they finished their training in reusable sanitary pad making. They were so happy because they had benefited from the training as they were able to make reusable sanitary pads at the end of the training.



No extra pads were produced however the team at the Centre carried out marketing of the Happy pads by moving door to door in the households around the promotion Centre.

### 4. Follow up on the two project schools in Mubende (Kiyita and Christ the King) to check on the progress of their un finished facilities.

The project officer through making phone calls since all target schools were still in holidays to the two project schools including Kiyita and Christ the King, in Mubende to check on the progress of the facilities, was informed by the Headteachers that facilities will be completed by the end of term (late Next April) one after raising some funds from the parents. Therefore, the situation is still the same until schools' resume.

### 5. Preparing new promotion Center in Butambala

The team secured premises for the promotion center and hired two trainers (1 male and 1 female) who will conduct the training and production of happy pads at the center. Registration of trainees started on the 24<sup>th</sup> of Jan 2023. 8 female and 2 male trainees were registered as the process continues to receive more participants from the community.

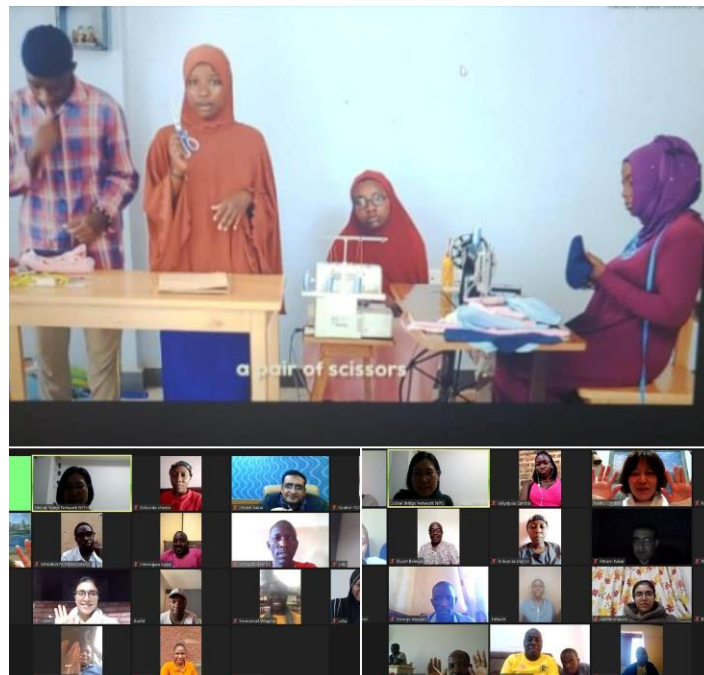


Promotion center premises in Butambala district

## 6. Online Training in Butambala

### 1) Video Demonstration on How to Make a Reusable Pad in Butambala

The VOTU team shot a 20 minutes video demonstrating how to make reusable pads. In this video, we explained the tools and materials needed to make reusable sanitary pads, the measurements using a sketch and cutting out on fabric. The instructors took us through the entire process from start to end. (see 'Feedback of online sessions' as References)



### 2) Conducted two Online sessions

Two online sessions were held to discuss the challenges faced by girls during menstruation in Uganda on the session one 21/01/2023 and also to demonstrate how to make reusable sanitary pads on the session two on 22/01/2023. Each session took 2 hours.

**General Attendance:**49 participants (30 female, 19 male) attended session one, while 39 participants (23 female, 16 male) attended session two. Participants represented 25 different civil society organization from Uganda and Pakistan.

**Session One (On 21/01/2023 at 11:00am (Uganda Time)):**

The team had an open online discussion about challenges menstruating girls face in the different areas of Uganda and other countries. The team used a participatory approach to engage participants. There were shared experiences from Iganga, Wakiso, and Mukono districts of Uganda as well as from Pakistan.

Some of the key issues addressed included; lack of MHM information among the girls and general communities, the myths/taboo that still exist, low male participation, lack of sanitary products and facilities in schools, low inclusion of people with disabilities in MHM interventions. This indicated that the challenges we are trying to solve in the project areas of Butambala, Mubende and Wakiso are far reaching even in other areas. The team further discussed the project interventions and activities to mitigate the challenges above since inception.

**Session Two (On 22/01/2023 at 3:00pm (Uganda Time)):**

The team opened a discussion about period poverty and the interventions to address it. Effects of period poverty were discussed which included; infections resulting from unhygienic options used due to lack of pads, sex trade and exploitation of girls in exchange of sanitary products, girls dropping out of school, stigma etc.

Reusable sanitary pad concept was introduced as participants' knowledge about reusable sanitary pads was assessed using open questions. SORAK staff explained the advantages of using reusable pads, how to use them and handling them for proper hygiene. She also explained the activities at Happy-pad promotion center in Wakiso.

A recorded video demonstrating how to make reusable pads was played for the participants to learn. Each session ended with a question and answer where participants reacted. Feedback forms were also sent to the participants at the end of each session.

**Positive influence**

- During the radio talk show at Luna FM Kibalinga, the Youth Councilor Kibalinga participated and appreciated the initiative of ensuring that girls are kept in schools. He promised to work with SORAK to conduct community sensitization regarding MHM, gender equality and Sexual Reproductive Health issues. (Mubende)
- Regarding Online sessions (Butambala)
  - Presented opportunities of new partnerships with other organizations. 25 organizations were represented. The participatory approach was effective as participants actively responded to the questions and shared their own experience.
  - The team learnt several lessons from the participants e.g., the issue of certifying happy pad at the UNBS<sup>1</sup> as mentioned by a Ministry of Health officer, inclusion of People with Disabilities (PWDs) as stated by a representative of Girls With a vision Uganda in Iganga district, considering a padded-pant to cater for those that can't afford underwear as stated by JENA Women Empowerment Initiative.
  - Majority of the participants attended up to the end of each session.
  - SORAK team greatly benefited from the online training prepared by VOTU team and realized that such trainings are so crucial during project implementation. Learnt a lot of experiences

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<sup>1</sup> The UNBS Product Certification Scheme aims at providing Third Party Guarantee of quality, safety and reliability of products to the consumers.

from the participants which SORAK will also apply during implementation. (Mubende and Wakiso)

- Ebola outbreak that had affected most of the activities was fought and the environment now free from the pandemic which will make implementation of activities successful. (Mubende)
- Listeners appreciated team for the wonderful information shared about MHM during the radio talk show and thanked their leader representing them at the radio. This was evidenced by the number of calls made during the talk show as they requested for more talk shows that provide them with information related on MHM issues. (Mubende)

### **Challenges**

- Network connectivity failed at some point during the online presentation. Some participants claimed they waited for long before they were logged into the session. (Butambala)
- Marketing of the pads is still a challenge but the team has tried and still trying its best to make some sales by moving door to door. (Wakiso Promotion Center)
- Schools were in a holiday season and all school related activities were not conducted though these will be implemented when schools resume.
- Uncertainty about the existence of the promotion centre after some of the equipment like some furniture being shifted to Butambala bothered the team especially the tailor at the centre but managed to make use of the available equipment. (Wakiso Promotion Center)
- Each session took 2 hours hence expensive in terms of internet for the participants some of whom didn't attend the second session. (Butambala)
- Project beneficiaries (teachers) lack smart gadgets and internet thus couldn't attend sessions (Butambala and Mubende)

### **Recommendations**

- Standardization of the happy pad is highly needed for both quality and size. (Wakiso and Butambala)
- Prepare for anyone who needs training about pad making any time from now. (Wakiso and Butambala)

### **Lessons Learnt**

- Online sessions are effective when participants are well engaged. Open discussions kept the participants interested.
- We should cater for the needs of people with disabilities.
- The design of the reusable pad should be made with the right standard to cater for comfort.
- Some participants of online sessions preferred physical demonstration on how to make pads. They were invited to the pad promotion centers. (Wakiso and Butambala)
- MHM challenges in the project areas are similar in many parts of the country.

<References >

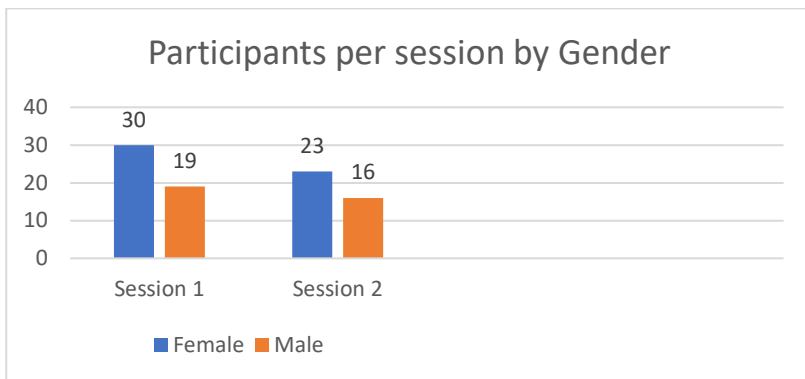
**Feedback of online sessions**

Participants responded positively during and after each session via both the zoom chat section and the online feedback forms (screenshots attached)

9 of 10 participants said the training content was understandable and helpful. Several reactions were recorded as shown in the attached screenshots below.

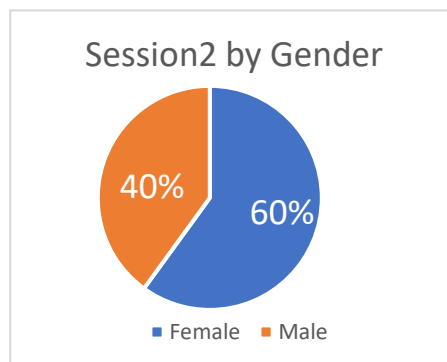
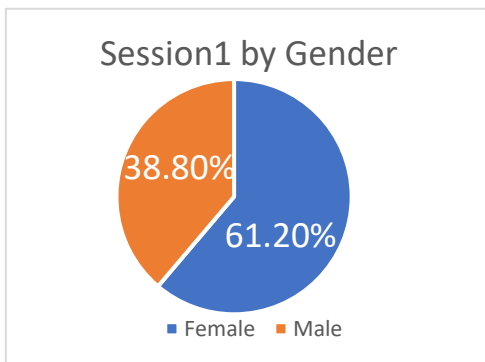
Our opinion was to hold two sessions but from the feedback, we opt to continue scheduling similar online discussions engaging the different organizations, partners, and stakeholders.

	<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>STAFF</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>SESSION 1</b>	41	8	49
<b>SESSION 2</b>	29	10	39
<b>TOTAL</b>	70	18	88



**Attendance by Gender:**

	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>SESSION1</b>	30	19	49
<b>SESSION 2</b>	23	16	39
<b>TOTAL</b>	53	35	88



**Organizations that attended:**

25 organizations were represented

1. Amacue Foundation	12. Girls With a vision Uganda
2. Health School Support Foundation	13. Visionary Lady Foundation
3. Ruth gaylord hospital	14. Awa Minami Tailoring School.
4. BRAC Uganda	15. Stitched by Wcraft
5. Creative Infants school Naguru	16. NPO Awa Cultural Heritage Forum
6. NPO Awa Cultural Heritage Forum	17. Golden Voice Foundation Africa
7. BRDRS	18. Joy for children Uganda

8. JENA Women Empowerment Initiative	19. Nimatabac Uganda Limited
9. Center for Education, Graduate Entrepreneurship and Empowerment	20. Youth Inclusion and Empowerment Network-YIEN
10. Sylvest Kikorongo Women Community	21. Creative infants Naguru
11. JICA Uganda	22. Tackle Africa
	23. Health School Support Foundation
	24. Uganda Youth Development Link
	25. Ministry of Health of Uganda

After the presentations participants reacted as follows;

### Session 1 Feedback form

We received 11 responses from the online feedback from after session 1

Q1. Was the training content helpful to you?

A1. All answered Yes.

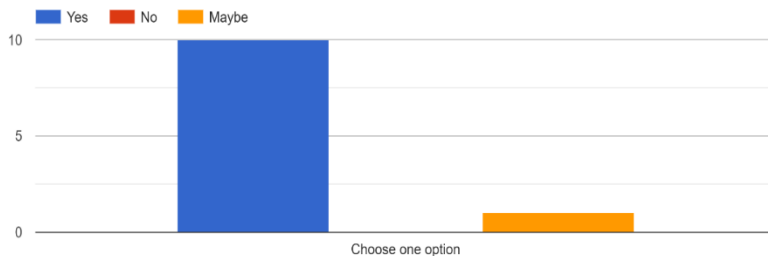
Was the training content helpful to you?



Q2. Was the training material easy to understand?

A2. 10 people responded Yes and 1 person responded Maybe

Was the training material easy to understand?



Q. What did you like most about the training?

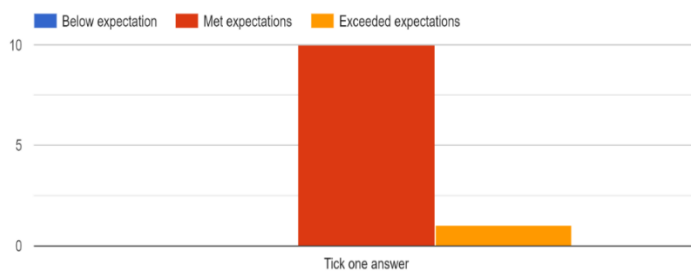
- Above question, which materials are you talking about? Booklet? It might be better to be clear what materials are.
- Overall, it was very good! Well don! Let's consider the name of training (for example, Happy MHM project training etc.) Participation style with JOY's example was very very good!!
- It was elaborative
- Engagement
- The presenter (Moses) was very confident with very good communication skills. He gave the presentation in very easy and simple words. I really liked the way he highlighted everyone's responses by noting them.
- I liked the way the material was presented with the evidence of images. It was marvelous. I cant wait for improvement of the lives of these girls concerning that matter. Well done.

- The style of presentation by the facilitator, and the summary he offered after a participant's contribution. All this made it easy to follow and understand.
- That was really a great information about the MHN updates and the interventions carried out in Uganda.
- The free discussion from different stake holders and knowledgeable people about MHM

How would you rate the quality of this training session?



Did the training meet your expectations?



Q. Do you have any suggestions that can help us improve the training program?

- Better time management
- No he was good
- To inform us Early, because today I was engaged.
- The host took long to let us in. It took him or her some good time.
- Sharing the recorded training session of today and that of tomorrow and avail any literature in that direction. Thank you.
- I would like to suggest here that, in the training the other related topic girls health should be included
- Maybe you can have more of a listening discussion from people who know about MHM deeply and it could be a learning platform And more time is needed for response from the audience as we ask the questions about what we need to know and share grassroots information that may not be easy to access from professionals "

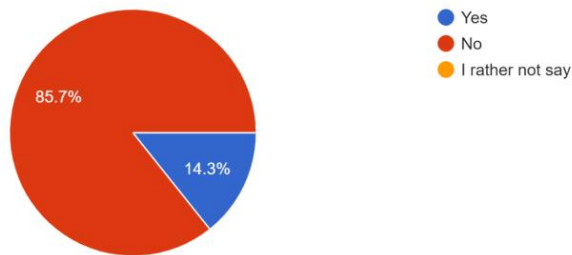
### Session 2 Feed Back

We received 14 responses of which participants responded as shown below



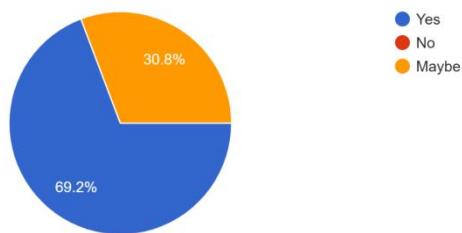
Have you ever used a reusable pad before?

14 responses



Would you recommend girls to use this type of pad?

13 responses



Q. What was your experience using reusable pads?

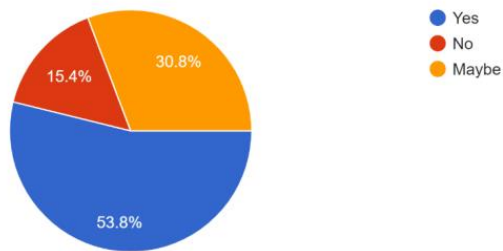
- Afraid to leak my blood as well as hand wash of them is hard work
- It was good because they were soft on the skin.
- Not applicable since I am a male
- Good and long lasting
- I didn't use
- I have never used.

Q. What's the reason you choose a reusable pad over the other types of pads available?

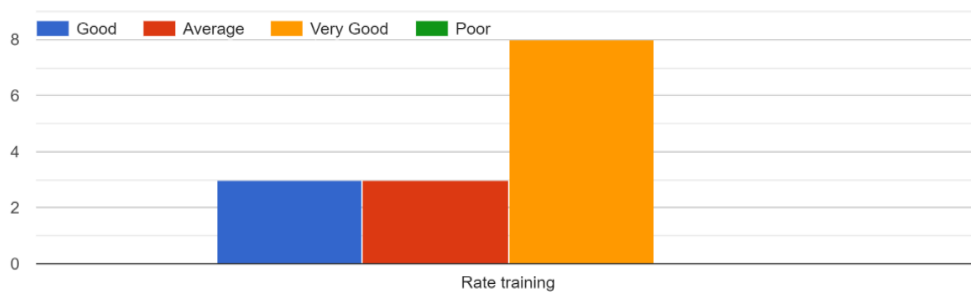
- They are reasonable, and enable girls to stay school
- Because they didn't cause any skin irritation.
- "Cost effective  
No risk of diseases caused by unknown materials used in synthetic pads"
- It is cost effective especially for girls that live in resource constrained areas like refugee settlements
- "Maintains good hygiene and long lasting
- They can be used many times at a low cost plus eco-friendly.
- Due to poverty and access to market in many areas of Balochistan where girls are not able to purchase the disposable pads for them.
- To save money
- I have never used.
- cheap and comfortable

After this session, Would you consider using a reusable pad some day?

13 responses

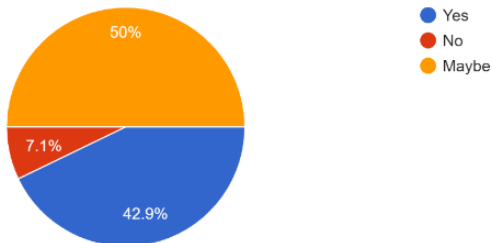


Was the pad making training clear and understandable?



After this training, are you able to make a reusable pad by your self?

14 responses



Q. Which part of the training caught your attention most?

- Measurement and cutting.
- The first part (it needs accuracy when taking measurements for a proper outcome)
- Drafting fabrics
- talk from SORAK team
- Selection of materials and taking measurements
- Making it
- pad making. Almost all
- The MHM importance at all and the management of available resources and awareness around the subject.
- How to make pads.
- The whole training
- pad making
- sanitary pad making
- The fact that the pads are being made from easy to access materials or clothing

Q. Any Comments to help us improve this training?

- It was very good and Good Job VOTU team. Time management need to be considered.
- You need better lighting and camera positioning
- they can improve on their pad making video clip, for example by making it a little shorter, making what they are doing (use color/thicker pen) much clearer, or inserting some pic on the side for better understanding.
- In case of taking the video, a thick ink should be used to draw lines so that the measurements and cutting is very clear to the viewers.
- Voice not loud enough
- Thank you very much. It was a fruitful lecture and workshop.
- Once again, thank you for your preparation and presentation."
- Although the MHM is one of the important subject and issues face by girls at schools. I would like to suggest that, in some of the areas and as per the context of that particular society, other girls issues may be parts of the project in future plans, such as, access to basic and quality education, awareness about girls rights, awareness about laws made for girls and others.
- This session should be in groups because discussion is matter during among people
- No comments
- you were a bit slow to upload the video otherwise it was some good work
- The training is ok and understandable but how are you going to evaluate whether people have gained the skills