

JICA Monthly Report April 2023

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

<Activities conducted>

1. Project midterm review meeting for Wakiso
2. Radio talk shows (Mubende, Wakiso)
3. Spot Messages to raise awareness on support for girls' education and increase on reusable sanitary pad users
4. School monitoring visits (Mubende and Wakiso and Butambala)
5. School to school MHM club learning visits (Mubende and Wakiso)
6. Happy pad promotion centre (Wakiso and Butambala)
7. 3rd MHM Online discussion

1. Project midterm review meeting

The meeting was conducted on the 3/April/2023 in Wakiso district with the objective of assessing the progress of project activities to generate lessons that will guide decision making during the implementation of the remaining project activities. The participants included; the Head teachers, Senior teachers. Members of the School Management Committee, representative of the MHM club and other key stakeholders like the Municipal Education Officer making a total of 43 participants.

Important findings included the following among others;

-It is prudent for schools to invite SORAK during the parents' meetings in order to sensitize them about issues of MHM with focus on male involvement in order for them to be supportive to the girls during menstruation. This is paramount because most of the male parents are not supportive.

-Schools to always first of all take learners through the theory of pad making and there after introduce them to the practical sessions of pad making using the machine by doing so the process of pad making will be simplified.

-Students that are competing for the different posts at the schools should be encouraged to include how they are going to manage MHM issues in their manifestos at school in order to ensure the continuity of the project work. This approach has not been used before but it is feasible for the continuity of the project interventions in the project schools.

-Schools to come up with a strategy of improvising incinerators in order to ensure effective disposal of pads to ensure a friendly MHM environment moving forward. This is because most

of the schools like Kitanda, Buwambo among others have poor disposal mechanisms where the disposable pads are disposed in the pit latrines.

The table below shows the attendance of participants

Students	SMC/PTA	Municipality leaders	Teachers	Total
3	9	1	30	43

Activity photo graphs

		
The Headteacher Jinja Karoli gives welcoming remarks	The Executive director gives the objective of the meeting and the project overview	The Municipal Education Officer gives his remarks
		
The MHM club president appreciates the support by given SORAK	The MHM club president for Kanyange mixed gives her remarks	The Senior Man for Buwambo C/U appreciates the support given by SORAK

2. Radio talk shows (Mubende, Wakiso and Butanbala)

In Mubende, the talk show was conducted in a duration of one hour at Luna FM located in Kibalinga sub county on the .3/April/2023 Community members were reminded about the need to support adolescent girls not forgetting male involvement in MHM issues with emphasis on those that cannot afford sanitary material so that they can comfortably stay at school. The major talking points were about the preparations for the MHM club learning visit where the schools were mobilized to turn up for the activity.



Project team sensitizing the community about the relevance of male involvement in MHM issues on the 3/April/2023

In Wakiso, a one hour talk show was conducted at Voice of Kiryagonja on the 6/April/2023 beginning from 7:00pm to 8:00pm in the evening. The participants included the Executive Director, projects manager and the Secretary for women Kiryagonja where the community was taken through the project overview and the achievements attained so far. Emphasis was put on the proper disposal of material used during menstruation and the availability of reusable sanitary pads at the Happy pad promotion centre. The secretary for women informed listeners about the responsibility of parents towards their children with emphasis on a girl child. Parents were encouraged to take their children to school.



Radio talk show at voice of Kiryagonja

In Butambala, a 1-hour radio talk show was conducted on 28th/ Apr/ 2023 at Voice of Butende emphasizing inclusion of girls with different disabilities in all MHM and SRH activities as well as promoting equality. The community were encouraged to pay more attention to this group of children so as to meet their menstrual and reproductive health needs. Parents and teachers were encouraged to practice patience with children with disabilities when extending menstrual health services and information. Community was encouraged to continuously engage boys and male adults in order to reduce on the stigma and discrimination against menstruating girls.

Community schools outside the target schools were called upon to prioritize menstruation hygiene. The team led by the team leader also reminded the community about the Happy Pad Promotion center and encouraged them to enrol for training program



Radio Talk Show at Voice of Butende 28th April 2023

3. 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: via Voice of Butende 21 times and via Voice of Kikambwe 22 times.

4. School monitoring visits (Mubende and Wakiso and Butambala)

The project schools in all the three districts were visited in order to track the progress of project activities to generate lessons and corrective action where need be. In addition, to identifying the best performing schools which are eligible for benchmarking in order to allow for identification of improved methods for implementing the project activities as below;


Mubende

The visits were conducted on the 11 and 12/April/2023 where the project team used the monitoring tool to assess the progress of the project activities. The key findings were;

- Schools have limited time for training learners reusable sanitary pad making but have resorted to scheduling sessions over the weekends and during holidays to enable a bigger number of students to acquire the skill.
- In most of the schools like Dyangoma, Gwanika and Katega, boys are more active when it comes to making reusable sanitary pads.
- Club members in most of the schools would wish to learn other skills using the sewing machine apart from making reusable sanitary pads.

- Club members are now better equipped with knowledge about MHM and are very active when it comes to supporting others with menstrual emergencies at school.
- Learners have acquired skills in making reusable sanitary pads

Re-usable pad making

		
MHM club leaders Kasasa P/S	Training in the use of the sewing machine at Kasasa P/S	Pads produced at Dyangoma P/S

Wakiso

Monitoring was conducted for three days including 14,15 and 17/Apr/2023 by the project officer and the following were the key findings;

- The children have improved a lot when it comes to MHM issues. “I have fewer complaints now and I think that it’s because the students help each other during menstrual emergencies or they learn from the lessons we teach them.” said the Senior lady Kanyange mixed P/S.
- Most of the parents are not cooperative regarding MHM issues where a girl can be given an emergency pad while at school and the same person comes back the following day for another pad due to the fact that some parents do not provide pads to the children while at home.
- In some schools like Kirolo UMEA, boys are not much interested in sanitary pad making but the teachers try to bring them on board.
- Pad making has become easy for learners as they are currently using machines unlike before when they used hands and it could take them a lot of time. However, since its one machine in most of the schools, at times girls dominate the machines. A request was made for the provision of a second machine which can be used by boys.
- The challenges of scarcity of pad making materials, water and parents not being cooperative are still in place.
- Transfers of teachers is still going on for example the head teacher of Kitungwa C/U left for another school and the senior man as well. The new head teacher will be available next term.
- Learners who belong to the MHM club still join other different schools which creates a gap but they are replaced by others in order to maintain the MHM club activities.

- Generally, production of pads depends on the availability of materials otherwise there is no specific number of pads made per month.

		
MHM club members being interviewed at Ssayi Bright	MHM club members being interviewed at Kirolo	Tailor repair machine at Kitanda c/u
		
Senior man Ssanga C/U guides learner how to cut materials	This is the MHM club member who leads others during sewing at Ssanga c/u	Pads made at Ssanga c/u

Butambala

School monitoring was conducted on 29/ Apr/ 2023 spearheaded by the team leader and the IT personnel. The team moved with tailor (trainer at promotion center) to monitor pad making in the schools. The monitoring tool was used in each of the 10 schools monitored and below were the key findings.

- Teacher participation and MHM club involvement in activities continues to blossom.
- Boys no longer take menstruation as an abnormality. “Surprisingly my girls can openly talk about menstruation even in the presence of boys. Boys do not laugh as they used to,” said the head teacher at Bule primary school
- In most schools, senior teachers have become more free and friendly to the adolescent girls who now feel free to open up.
- **Privacy of Washrooms/Changing rooms:** All washrooms had doors still intact with locks and no dents were seen in the walls. 5 schools i.e Butaalunga, Nawango, Bule, Kitagobwa and Nkokoma had no roofs
- **Hygiene of washroom facilities:** General hygiene has improved in all the beneficiary schools monitored. All school washrooms were found clean, and well-drained with floors still cemented. 3 schools (Ntolomwe, Bule and Kitagobwa) still struggle with water

availability as their water sources are very far from the school. However, during this rainy season, the situation has been less challenging.

- **Sanitary Materials used in washrooms:** All washrooms had soap for hand washing. 7 out of 10 schools had emergency pads in the washrooms. Bule, Ntolomwe and Kayenje primary schools had no emergency pads. 3 schools i.e Kayenje, Ntolomwe and Lwamasaka had changing uniforms.
- **MHM clubs:** these were still functional in all 10 schools. Most active in Bule primary school, Nkokoma, Ntolomwe, Kayenje and Lwamasaka respectively. The club members who had left for secondary school during the last monitoring visit were replaced through election of new members by the senior teachers. MHM club members understand their roles better than the previous visit.
- 3 schools (Kitagobwa, Nawango and Butalunga) who received electric sewing machines were challenged by absence of power at the school and couldn't produce pads. They requested the team to replace the machines with manual machines.
- 7 Schools stated challenge of insufficient training material and the team advised them to use any available material locally to cut the costs.

		
MHM club at Nawango primary school	Butalunga Girls display pads made	Senior teacher shows water tank at Nawango Primary
		
MHM club members at Ntolomwe P/S	Learners at Kayenje P/S after a pad making demo	Washroom at Ntolomwe P/S. Tissue paper, soap, basin and water found

5. School to school MHM club learning visits (Mubende and Wakiso)

This was done in Wakiso and Mubende to benchmark and come up with improved methods and ideas of implementing project activities in the respective project schools as elaborated

below;

Mubende

On 20 /Apr/ 2023 the different project schools including; St Mary's Kiyita, Kasasa and Kabowa primary schools converged at Gwanika Primary school. The schools were represented by the Senior teachers and a minimum of three MHM club members including the President/Chair persons, their assistants and other members. The total number of participants included 29 i.e. 14 female students, 7 male students, 6 female teachers and 2 male teachers. Worth noting is that Gwanika Primary School was selected to host the learning visit because their performance regarding implementation of the project activities is commendable.

The activity was conducted in a duration of five hours in a participatory manner guided by the day's program which included; an opening prayer from a volunteer, welcoming remarks from the Head teacher Gwanika Primary School, objective of the learning visit by the projects manager, experience sharing from the different senior teachers, learning questions to the MHM club members by the project officer, experience sharing from Gwanika Primary School and way forward as below;

Attendance of participants

Students	Female teachers	Male teachers	Total
21	6	2	29

Schools were able to learn from one another and promised to utilize the knowledge acquired as they go back. "I have today learnt to improvise when it comes to material used for making pads and this will help us to deal with scarcity of such materials." Said the Senior Woman Teacher St Mary's Kiyita.

		
The tailor for Gwanika Primary School helps the MHM club Vice president Kiyita to fix the thread in the bobin	The MHM club treasurer for Kiyita learns how to fix the thread with support from the tailor Gwanika P/S	Learners get exposed on how to operate the machine

		
<p>Participants during the meeting</p>	<p>The Project Officer takes participants through the learning questions</p>	<p>The treasure MHM club Kiyita shares her experience about how she gets to know that it's a few days to menstruation</p>
		
<p>The MHM club president Gwanika shares her experience</p>	<p>The MHM club president Kasasa shares solutions to challenges faced during menstruation</p>	<p>The two boys who are the most active during pad making sessions at Gwanika</p>
		
<p>The Senior Woman Kasasa shares the school's experience about the project</p>	<p>The senior woman for Kabowa shares experience regarding project activity implementation</p>	<p>Reusable pads made at Gwanika P/S</p>

		
<p>The Senior Woman for Kiyita feels the texture of the pads made at Gwanika</p>	<p>The projects Manager thakes participants through the objective of the visit</p>	<p>Welcoming remarks by the Head Teahcer Gwanika P/S</p>

Wakiso

Schools Learning visit

On 14/Apr/2023 Maganjo UMEA and Kanyange Mixed participated in the learning visit at Jinja Kalori Primary School making a total of 43 participants including three senior teachers and 40 learners (34 girls and 6 boys).

The session was guided by experience sharing based on the learning questions in line with MHM. For example, the causes of menstruation, challenges faced during menstruation, how to overcome the challenges among others.

The following were the key findings;

- Boys were not aware of what girls go through during menstruation like severe stomachs and it was an opportunity for them to learn. This is as a result of experience sharing by the girls about the challenges they face during menstruation.
- Most of the girls did not know how to overcome the challenges faced during menstruation like severe stomachache, headache, laziness among other challenges and the session was an eye opener in that regard.
- How to wash a re-usable sanitary pad (this girl used to keep it and the stain dries up but was advised to soak it immediately after use). This is one of the girls at Kanyange Girls P/S who had just started experiencing her periods.
- Learners got knowledge on how best to clean the pad because some of them ignored the issue of soaking before washing.
- MHM club members are more informed especially about menstruation and reproductive health.

		
Project officer poses with the two senior ladies from the visiting schools	Participants from the three schools during the learning visit	Senior lady Maganjo UMEA giving closing remarks
		
A girl from Kanyange shares her experience about MHM	A girl from Jinja Karoli shares her experience about MHM	Senior man briefing visitors about pad making at Jinja Karoi p/s

6. Happy pad promotion centre (Wakiso and Butambala)

Wakiso

Training of the 147 learners at the promotion center is ongoing. A total of 50 pads were made and 60 sold

There were 8 female outsiders (None students) who attended the training for the month.

<Butambala>

Pad Production by trainees

15 trainees enrolled to date produced 97 pads in the three weeks of April

Sales Plan

The team identified that the first customers should be the students in the 10 target schools in Butambala and that as a marketing tool, we need to introduce the actual product for them to use. This will be done at a free cost by donating the sample pads as was done during the monitoring visit.

Once these students appreciate the pad product, they become advertisers and brand ambassadors to attract new buyers.

This brand awareness will take two months on a scheduled plan under development by the team leader.

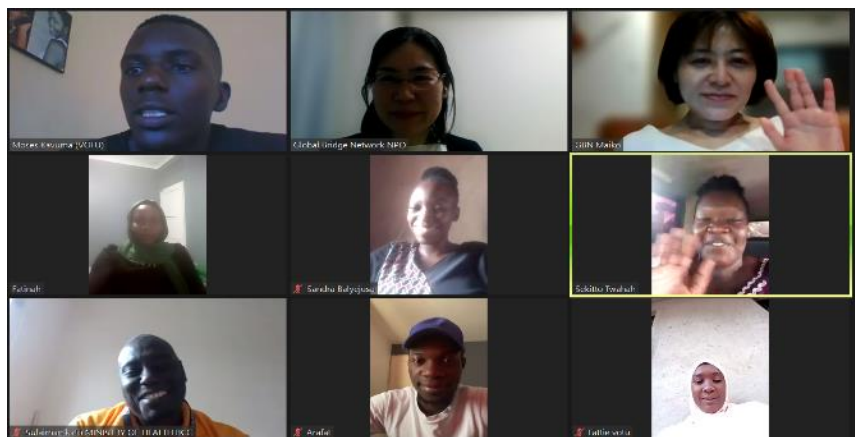
7. 3rd MHM Online Discussion

A 2 hours online discussion was conducted on 28/ Apr/ 2023 under the theme ‘Inclusion of PWDs in MHM programing’ The rationale was to understand the challenges faced by girls with disabilities in the management of their menstruation and reproductive health, the possible solutions and innovations to have their needs addressed.

19 participants attended the zoom discussion that was coordinated by SORAK, VOTU and two guest speakers Fatnah Nantumbwe from Operation One Project Butambala and Sandra Balyejusa a person with disability from Iganga.

Participants reacted and recommended as follows;

- The project team should consider disability in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of interventions.
- MHM and SRH information should be designed in adequate form depending on the different disabilities. This could be tactical tools or more audio - visual materials with sign language or shorter session
- Washroom facilities should be designed to favor and include persons with disabilities.
- Similar trainings as the Teacher’s Trainings should be done for the care takers of PWDs
- Mr. Kato from the Ministry of Health advised the team to always work and seek guidance from the structures of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health



Positive influences of all activities

- Participants were eager to learn from one another and were able to share their views in a participatory manner during the school learning visits. (Wakiso and Mubende)
- The host schools for both Wakiso and Mubende were well prepared to take others through their experience in implementing the project activities where they had prepared a report which was shared with participants during the meeting for Mubende.

- Listeners to the radio talk shows appreciated SORAK for the project work which has greatly improved the standards of the schools for Mubende.
- In Wakiso, all the ten project schools were represented and the participants during the midterm review meeting were eager to share their views regarding the progress of the project in a participatory manner
- During the radio talk show at Voice of Kiryagoja in Wakiso district, the Secretary for women was creating awareness about proper parenting with emphasis put on the girl child which was coherent with our topic of MHM, she was impressed and promised to work hand in hand with the project team where need may arise.
- Voice of Butende advised the team to create various spot messages with varying information for the community to consume. (Butambala)
- General hygiene in the washrooms has greatly improved (Butambala)
- The online discussion on PWDs was very informative with appreciation from participants.

Challenges

- Time management was poor as the meeting started late due to the fact that some participants came late but project team waited for them to arrive to start off the mid-term review meeting in Wakiso and the MHM club learning visit in Mubende.
- Not all the MHM club members attended the meeting due to the fact they were preparing for end of term exams in Mubende.
- Language barriers as many of the learners would prefer using their local languages to explain themselves well at Wakiso and Mubende during the MHM club learning visits.
- Absenteeism at the promotion center due to the rainy season. (Butambala)
- Invitation to the online discussion was restricted to only members who registered via a google form hence less attendance.
- Insufficient training materials used for pad making at the schools.

Lessons Learnt

- There is positive change in attitude towards MHM issues in the project schools for Mubende and Wakiso.
- When schools come together and share ideas about their experiences regarding project implementation, workable solutions to problems can be identified.
- It was clear from the students in Mubende that parents are not friendly to their children and they end up sharing their challenges regarding menstruation with their fellow learners or their neighbors back home.
- Girls are freer to talk about menstruation without fear. (Butambala)
- Inclusion of all groups of menstruating adults when planning MHM interventions.

Recommendations

- Schools to utilize the parents' meetings to identify professional tailors and should consider them as the first priority when it comes to making uniforms in order to cater their salary. (Mubende)
- The Senior Lady for Kiyita to facilitate two students to attend training sessions at Gwanika Primary School over the weekend in order for them to strengthen their skills in pad making and how to work on the machine in case of any mechanical challenges. (Mubende)
- Schools to utilize weekends for training in pad making as there is always limited time for training learners during week days. (Mubende)
- Schools to improvise material used for making pads in order to ensure that pads are available at school. (Butambala, Mubende and Wakiso)
- Participants to come up with action plans on how they are going to improve the implementation of project work in their respective schools (School to school MHM club learning visits)
- More counseling and guidance needed for the learners to cope with usual challenges of puberty. For example, lack of money for buying material used during menstruation
- Schools should think about incorporating vocational skilling as a way to go for the next generation of learners so as to address the demands of the new secondary school curriculum.