



**SORAK Development Agency**

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NPO法人グローバルブリッジネットワーク  
**Global Bridge Network**

## **Project: “Improvement of the School Environment to Combat Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) challenges to Stop Adolescent Girls’ School Dropouts in Uganda”**

### **Activity: “Building a reusable sanitary pad making and supply chain”**

(Activity: 3-2: Conduct 13 parish community meetings based on providing reusable sanitary pad information and awareness raising)

### **Date and Location:**

From May 18, 2018 to June 30, 2018, awareness-raising meetings were conducted in 13 parishes in two different sub counties, such as Kibalinga and Nabingoola, aimed at sharing information on reusable sanitary pads and promoting the buying and use of reusable sanitary pads in the targeted communities. (See the references in “Appendix 1: Schedule” at end of this report)

### **Background**

The project “**Improvement of the School Environment to Combat Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Challenges to Stop Adolescent Girls’ School Dropouts in Uganda**” targets the Kibalinga Primary school, Lwawuna Primary School and Precious Child Learning Centre from the two sub-counties of Kibalinga and Nabingoola in the Mubende district central part of Uganda. To ensure sustainability of the project, SORAK, with support from GBN and LUSH, constructed a sanitary pad making unit at the SORAK office to start production.

In March 2018, SORAK started making reusable sanitary pads for sale to other untargeted schools and the community at large. In the community where SORAK serves, very few people who can afford to buy reusable sanitary pad on a monthly basis, and most women and girls resorted to using pieces of cloth, toilet paper and other materials which cannot sustain them for the entire day. Young girls in schools have ended up staying at home during menstruation because of a lack of what to use while at school. Very few are aware of the reusable sanitary pads. SORAK needed to make its reusable sanitary pads popular among female pupils in schools, parents and the community at large. For this reason, SORAK conducted parish-based awareness-raising meetings in all the 13 parishes that make up the 2 sub-counties of Kibalinga and Nabingoola.

### **Purpose of the awareness-raising meetings**

The meetings were intended to promote the use of SORAK-made reusable sanitary pads. The purpose was also intended to make parents/guardians more aware about their roles and responsibilities in promoting MHM among girls attending school in order to reduce on girl’s absenteeism’s as a result of menstruation.

### **Number of participants**

The parish-based awareness-raising meetings to promote reusable sanitary pads attracted 784 females and 84 males, which included women from different villages, local leaders (chairpersons at the village level), and opinion and religious leaders. (Refer to “Appendix 2: Participants” at end of this report.)

### **Issues discussed**

Pertinent issues were discussed with the respective participants during the awareness-raising meetings. Some of the participants especially men, confessed that the meetings were timely and eye-opening. The following issues were discussed during the awareness-raising meetings:

- Brief overview of menstrual hygiene management
- Roles of parents in the promotion of menstrual hygiene management for girls attending school
- Introduction of SORAK-made reusable sanitary pads
- Showing the advantages of the reusable sanitary pads
- Applicability/How to use

### **Activities/Issues discussed and persons who facilitated**

#### **1. Brief overview of menstrual hygiene management (MHM):**

SORAK program staff member Ms. Nnakiruuta Hadijah briefly presented a general overview of MHM. In her remarks, she strongly pointed out maintaining proper personal hygiene while in menstruation. Among the things related to personal hygiene she talked about, these included taking a bath at least twice a day or more; proper drying of menstrual materials; the dangers a person is exposed to while using unclean/ dirty menstrual materials; natural remedies to reduce menstrual cramps such as doing exercises and drinking hot water without sugar, among others.

SORAK's Executive Director explained the roles and responsibilities of parents and guardians in promoting MHM among girls going to school. In his speech, he expressed his worries about the parent's negligence towards providing menstrual materials for their daughters to use while at school. He clearly pointed out that if parents and guardians do not provide menstrual materials to their daughters, it means that their daughters will end up using old pieces of clothes which cannot even sustain them for the whole day. He also said that if a parent/guardian fails to provide menstrual materials to their girls attending school, this means that their daughters will miss school between 3-4 days per month and 9-12 days per term and 27-36 days in a year, which affects their performance. He therefore called upon all parents, guardians and well-wishers to play their roles and responsibilities in promoting MHM among girls going to school, which included buying menstrual pads and providing counseling related to MHM.

#### **2. Introduction of SORAK-made reusable sanitary pads:**

SORAK sanitary pad making volunteer Ms. Babirye Namyalo Maria Gorretti introduced the SORAK-made reusable sanitary pad to community members who attended the parish-based awareness-raising meetings. In her communication, she explained each material SORAK uses and the purpose of each material used to make the reusable sanitary pad. The materials she explained included the stretcher, soft end, polythene, buttons, cotton wool/uda. The stretcher and polythene prevents blood from entering nickers and buttons tighten nickers, while cotton wool/uda absorbs blood and the soft end is the top layer that prevents cotton from entering the female reproductive system.





Giving the advantages of SORAK-made reusable sanitary pads:

SORAK program staff member Ms. Nnakiruuta Hadijah mentioned the advantages of SORAK locally made reusable sanitary pads. Among the advantages she said that they're inexpensive because one pad can be used for a period of 12 months. Also, these SORAK-made reusable sanitary pads contain no chemicals and are made locally. While pointing out the advantages of reusable sanitary pads, she strongly emphasized proper personal hygiene. She also requested the community members to welcome and use the SORAK-made reusable sanitary pads.

She also demonstrated how to wear the reusable sanitary pad. She allowed members to ask questions concerning the SORAK-made reusable sanitary pads. Some questions included: Whether it was possible for them to learn how to make these reusable sanitary pads, where they can find the SORAK-made reusable pads and where SORAK gets the materials used for making these reusable pads, among others.

**Activity Photos**



*SORAK program staff members demonstrating how to wear SORAK made reusable sanitary pad in Nabingoola Parish*



*SORAK members explaining the advantages of SORAK reusable sanitary pads in Nkandwa Parish*



*SORAK Programme demonstrating how to use a reusable sanitary pad in sub-county Lubimbiri Parish Nabingoola*



*Kabowa women attentively learning how to use a SORAK-made reusable pad*





*Ready for use, SORAK Programme Manager demonstrating how to use the reusable pad*



*SORAK Program Manager Hadijah with a nicker demonstrating how a reusable sanitary pad is used in Kibalinga B Parish, Kibalinga sub-county*



*SORAK Executive Director taking a group photo at Kasana, Kibalinga sub-county*

### **Outcomes/ Achievements of the awareness-raising meetings**

- At the end of the awareness-raising meetings, participants were able to commit to proper menstrual hygiene management, in addition to knowing the dangers/risks girls are exposed to while using unhygienic menstrual materials.
- Parents who participated in the awareness-raising meetings acknowledged their roles and responsibilities of providing materials for their daughters during menstruation. Some pledged to provide support to their children during menstruation.
- Fifteen (15) promotional sets of reusable sanitary pads were sold during the awareness meetings. SORAK also donated 5 sets of reusable sanitary pads to active participants.

- Thirteen (13) community-based active SORAK sales representatives were successfully identified to find clients in need of reusable pads. This will also help to provide feedback regarding SORAK-made reusable pads from users to SORAK for making quality improvements.

### Recommendations from participants

- SORAK was requested to participate in the exhibition that will be organized by the Mubende district to showcase SORAK's reusable sanitary pad making innovation, which is scheduled for July or August of this year (2018).
- It was recommended that SORAK and its donor come up with a packaging material for the reusable sanitary pads for ease of marketing and identification.
- It was also recommended that SORAK, if possible, introduce the component of training women groups on how to make these reusable sanitary pads in order to increase production and minimize school girl dropouts because of a lack of menstrual materials.

### References

#### Appendix 1: Schedule

Date	Time	Location	Sub-county
18 <sup>th</sup> /03/2018	03:12 pm	Kiyita	Nabingoola
25 <sup>th</sup> /03/2018	02:05 pm	Kisombwa	Kibalinga
08/04/2018	03:26 pm	Nabingoola	Nabingoola
15/04/2018	04:03 pm	Kibalinga A	Kibalinga
22/04/2018	02:04 pm	Kabubu	Kibalinga
29/04/2018	03:10 pm	Lubimbiri	Nabingoola
13/05/2018	02:26 pm	Nkandwa	Kibalinga
19/05/2018	03:02 pm	Kabalungi	Nabingoola
20/05/2018	02:11 pm	Kibalinga B	Kibalinga
26/05/2018	04:10 pm	Kasana	Kibalinga
16/06/2018	02:02 pm	Kafundezi	Nabingoola
23/06/2018	03:15 pm	Kabowa	Kibalinga
30/06/2018	03:04 pm	Ntungamo	Kibalinga

## Appendix 2: Participants

The table below shows the total number of participants attended per parish by gender.

Location	Females	Males
Kiyita	55	08
Kisombwa	70	10
Nabingoola	48	05
Kibalinga A	62	06
Kabubu	55	03
Lubimbiri	68	09
Nkandwa	70	02
Kabalungi	49	06
Kibalinga B	60	10
Kasana	54	08
Kafundezi	71	02
Kabowa	63	08
Ntungamo	59	07
<b>Total</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>84</b>