

JICA Monthly Report May 2023

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

<Activities conducted>

1. Radio talk shows (Mubende and Wakiso)
2. Spot Messages to raise awareness on support for girls' education and increase on reusable sanitary pad users
3. Happy pad promotion centre (Butambala)
4. Forth MHM Online discussion

1. Radio talk shows (Mubende and Wakiso)

In Mubende, the talk show was conducted in a duration of one hour at Luna FM located in Kibalinga sub county on the 19th /May/2023. Community members were reminded about the need to support adolescent girls with the right information regarding MHM. Various ways of availing information were shared including; Through guidance and counselling sessions at schools, media campaigns, using community radios among others.



Project officer creates awareness about breaking the silence about MHM

In Wakiso, a one-hour talk show was conducted at Tiger FM on the 28/May/2023 beginning from 7:00pm to 8:00pm in the evening. The Executive Director took listeners through the project overview and the achievements attained so far. He encouraged listeners to make use of reusable sanitary pads which are cost effective and ecofriendly. He urged parents to inform their children about MHM issues in order to avoid the challenges associated with limited knowledge about the same.



The executive director educates the listeners about breaking the silence about MHM

2. 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.

3. 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.

Butambala

The team organized a community outreach in Kalamba village on 25th May 2023 in partnership with Operation One Project Foundation (OPF), an NGO in Kibibi who mobilized 48 community members to undergo a practical training on how to make reusable sanitary pads.

Of the 48 participants, 35 were female adults and 13 were male. The OPF contributed material/fabric, needles, scissors, sewing machines and all tools which they used to make the pads. Each participant made a pad at the end of the day's training session.

Participants were very eager and excited to learn. Each of them went home with a pad.

The team at OPF made arrangement with the VOTU team to continue organizing similar outreaches to reach more community members in the coming months. Plans are underway to have the next community training.

Six(6) local leaders including village woman counsellors of Kalamba, minister of health and education of Kalamba town council, LC1, LC2, LC3 chairpersons attended and participated in the activity.

The objectives of the community training included;

- To address the existing cultural attitudes and misconceptions around menstrual health and hygiene among girls and women in Butambala.
- To address/ respond to the community need of accessing sanitary wears during girl’s and women’s menstruation period.
- To identify menstrual health issues among girls and women in Butambala that require attention and draw recommendations to those concerned accordingly.



Team leader VOTU trains community members of Kalamba (how to make reusable pad using free hand)



Trainees learning how to use a button press machine as they finish making a pad



VOTU project staff and the coordinator of Operation One Project our community partner



Adult women and teenagers undergo pad making training

4. MHM Online Discussion

A two hours online discussion was conducted on 30th/ May / 2023 under the theme ‘**Breaking silence about Menstrual Hygiene Management.**’ The rationale was to raise awareness about issues of Menstrual Hygiene Management by breaking the silence among the youths. The topics of discussion included; Survey findings in line with limited knowledge about MHM issues, major factors which lead to limited knowledge about issues of MHM (Myths and taboos), project interventions in that regard, way forward and recommendations. A total of 13 participants (including Votu, GBN and SORAK staffs) attended the zoom discussion that was coordinated by SORAK and VOTU.

Participants reacted and recommended as follows;

- There is need to utilize both traditional and mainstream media to amplify issues of Menstrual Hygiene Management byway of breaking the silence through radio talk shows, spot adverts, using media campaigns on menstruation, using the SNS platforms like Facebook, Twitter among others
- There is need to use participatory theatre in order to amplify the voices regarding MHM for the target beneficiaries to easily receive the message. This can take shape of role plays, drama and songs in that regard.
- There is need to train the girls in how to make and use reusable sanitary pads which are eco-friendly as well as cost effective.
- It is important to avail information regarding MHM in accessible formats in addition to working hand in hand with the different responsibility holders.



Project

Improving schools' Education environment for adolescent girls by addressing menstrual hygiene challenges in (Wakiso, Butambala and Mubende) Uganda

Braking silence about Menstrual Hygiene Management

Date: 30/05/2023

SORAK DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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 online session.
- New participants joined the online discussion and were eager to learn more about the topic of discussion and promised to work with team to invite other members to other scheduled online discussions moving forward.
- The online discussion about breaking the silence about menstruation was very informative with appreciation from participants.
- Listeners to the radio talk shows appreciated SORAK for the project work which has greatly improved the standards of the schools for Mubende.
- Participants at the community training in Kalamba village of Butambala asked for more training sessions in pad making.

Challenges

- The network was unstable during the online discussion but the participants were patient enough to follow closely as the network went on improving.
- Fabric/material remains a challenge during pad making trainings in schools (Butambala). We continue to encourage trainees to contribute as well as forming partnerships with other community groups for a combined effort. (Butambala)
- The time for the community training of pad making in Kalamba was limited in regard to the big number of trainees.

Lessons Learnt

There is a line of challenges regarding access to information about MHM and a lot needs to be done. This clearly came out during the online discussion from participants.

There is need to strategically find solutions to the insufficient material for pad making

Partnership with other community groups can steer the project to reach more beneficiaries. It also boosts community participation

Recommendations

Utilize fliers during communication regarding the online sessions which can be shared on the various platforms for more visibility to ensure that many participants turn up during the sessions