

## JICA Monthly Report June 2023

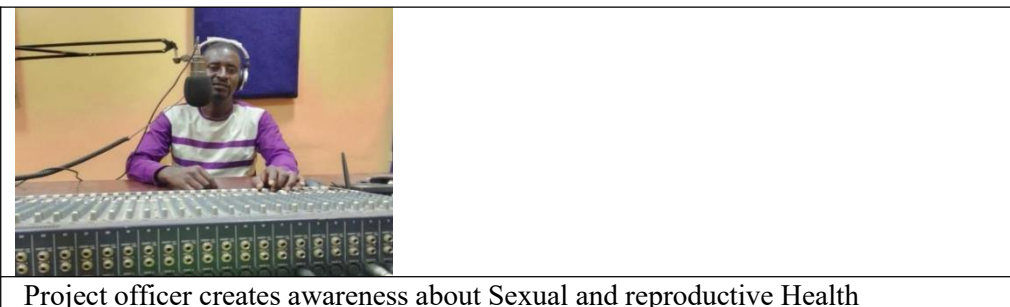
### IMPROVING SCHOOL'S EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS BY ADDRESSING MENSTRUAL HYGIENE CHALLENGES

#### <Activities conducted>

1. Radio talk shows
2. Spot Messages to raise awareness on support for girls' education and increase on reusable sanitary pad users
3. Monitoring visit to the project schools
4. Happy pad promotion centre (Butambala)
5. Preparations for the fifth MHM Online discussion

#### 1. Radio talk shows

**In Mubende**, the talk show was conducted in a duration of one hour at Luna FM located in Kibalinga sub county on the 19<sup>th</sup> /June/2023. Community members were reminded about the need to support adolescent girls with the right information regarding Sexual and Reproductive health in order to protect them from getting teenage pregnancies, early marriages and other related challenges. The different stakeholders like religious leaders were encouraged to play their role in that regard.



**In Wakiso**, a one-hour talk show was conducted at Tiger FM on the 29/June/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 as ever which are cost effective and eco-friendly. He urged parents and other relevant stakeholders to provide and avail information regarding Sexual Reproductive Health in order to avoid the challenges like teenage pregnancies associated with limited knowledge about (Sexual Reproductive Health).



The Executive Director educates the listeners about SRH

**In Butambala**, a one-hour radio talk show was conducted on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at Voice of Kikambwe and Voice of Butende respectively.

The topic of discussion was “What age is appropriate for children be educated about body changes, reproductive health and menstruation?” The team leader informed the community about the varying ages at which children start to experience adolescent signs. “Today, children experience their first period at an age younger than 8 years while others start later. Even at 16 years”, explained the team leader. He advised parents, teachers, and guardians to pay close attention to child development. Mrs Atala emphasized the need for parents to engage their children in the friendliest approach to build their confidence and help them open. “Many girls continue to live in fear and isolation as they start to experience body changes like breast enlargement and growth of pubic hair. This is attributed to being naïve and uninformed”, lamented the host at Voice of Butende. “When children know about their bodies and their reproductive health, they are more aware and careful not to engage in irresponsible acts of sexuality which can lead to pregnancy and ultimately dropping out of school”, continued Mrs Atala

## **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 pads are aired as follows;

- Mubende: via Luna FM 6 times a day.
- Wakiso: via Voice of Kiryagonja 10 times a day.
- Butambala: 30 spot messages were played at voice of Butende and 21 messages at Voice of Kikambwe. On 17<sup>th</sup> June 2023

## **3. Monitoring visit to the project schools**

### **Mubende district**

The project officer conducted the monitoring visit to the ten project schools on the 21/June/2023 including; Kasasa, CAWODISA, Kasaana, St Mary’s Gwanika, St Mary’s Kiyita, Ikula and Dyangoma Primary Schools in order to assess the progress of the project work including reusable sanitary pad making, counselling sessions regarding MHM and Gender awareness among others.

**Key findings**

- Students’ knowledge about MHM and Gender Awareness has improved this is attributable to the counselling sessions conducted at the respective schools.
- Both boys and girls have learnt how to make re-usable sanitary pads.
- Parents are supportive towards reusable sanitary pad making whereby; they contribute 1,000 UGX/ for buying material used for pad making in schools like; Gwanika, Dyangoma and Kasasa. More still, Gwanika acquired another sewing machine through support from one of the female parents.
- Students’ hygiene has improved especially for the girls because they are taught how to manage themselves during periods.
- Skilling is not only for learners but also the teachers. This is evident at St Marys’ Kiyita Primary where the senior lady is a tailor and has taught another female teacher with whom they now train the learners.

**Club members learn how to make reusable sanitary pads**

		
St Mary’s Gwanika	Kasasa	St.Mary’s Kiyita
		
Kabowa	Christ The King	CAWODISA
		
Dyangoma	Ikula	Kasaana P/S
		

**Wakiso district**




Monitoring was done on the 29-30/06/2023 with aid of a monitoring tool that looked at different aspects of the school and each of those had indicators to assess the progress of the project implementation with focus on the WASH facilities including; washroom where privacy, hygiene, availability of water and materials in the washroom were key indicators. Awareness creation was also part of the tool where the MHM club member, their responsibilities and topics covered were assessed. Below are some of the key findings;

**Key findings**

- Lwadda C/U has a washroom that is roofed and girls shifted from using the old cracked washroom to a new one. The challenge is the population of over 1,000 students who use the washroom and this calls for provision of more rooms to the wash room to accommodate the bigger number of the students to avoid congestion.
- There is a good response from some parents towards support for the girls during menstruation. This was evident at Ssanga C/U Primary school where a female parent bought material for pad making.
- Skilling is not only for learners but also the teachers. This is evident at Kitungwa C/U where the senior lady is a tailor and has taught another female teacher with whom they now train the learners.
- Learners are increasingly becoming freer with teachers and freely talking about menstrual hygiene management issues
- Sharing experiences through the learning visits gave some learners at Kanyange Mixed and Maganjo UMEA confidence in their teachers after realizing it is what learners elsewhere are doing and they wished they could still have more visits to other schools.
- The new head teacher at Kitungwa C/U Primary school loved and embraced the project especially when she realized that boys are inclusive and active in pad making.
- Many of the learners have taken advantage of the sewing machine to repair their school uniforms in case of damage.

		
Boys during pad making using a sewing machine at Kitungwa	Sewing in progress at Kitungwa C/U	Some girls at Kitungwa learning how to use the sewing machine

		
<p>Senior man Ssanga c/u showing the available pads</p>	<p>Pads and materials used at Ssanga C/U.</p>	<p>Some of the club members at Ssanga C/U p/s</p>
		
<p>A role cotton cloth donated by a parent at Kitungwa C/U p/s</p>	<p>Pads made by machine and one by hand at Ssayi Bright.</p>	<p>Improved pad from hand to machine made</p>
		
<p>Some of the MHM club members at Ssayi Brightn</p>	<p>Some of MHM club members at Maganjo UMEA</p>	<p>Interview with MHM club members at Jinja Karoli</p>
		
<p>MHM club members at Kanyange Mixed p/S</p>	<p>During an interaction with club members at Kanyange Mixed</p>	<p>Project officer with Senior lady Jinja Karoli p/s</p>

		
Project officer with the new headteacher Kitungwa C/U.	Senior woman, club president and project officer at Lwadda	Interview with one of the male students at Lwadda C/U p/s

### **Butanbala district**

4 target schools (Butende, Butalunga, Kiwala and Lawamasaka) were monitored on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023. On the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023, the team visited and monitored 3 schools. (i.e Kayenje, Ntolomwe and Bule) Nkokoma, Nawango and Kitagobwa primary schools were monitored on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

### **Key findings;**

#### **School Population**

- The average number of learners per target school was 379 and the average number of girls in P4 to P7 was 124.
- There was a decrease in the population of learners at Kitagobwa C/S, Bule and Nawango primary schools. This was attributed to migration of learners to other schools and some relocating to other districts. At Kitagobwa primary school, the senior woman reported that collapse of the toilet greatly attributed to the high number of learners leaving the school.
- MHM club members who changed school were replaced by new members.

#### **Privacy of the Wash Room Facilities**

All 10 schools had doors fixed and locks intact. One school (Kitagobwa) had a washroom no longer accessible due to a collapsing toilet adjacent. Whereas the roofing had no effect on the privacy of the users, 5 schools still have missing roofs on the washrooms.

In case of kitagobwa c/s their toilets collapsed and this has made them not to use the wash room. This is because the wash room was attached to the toilets and no student is allowed to go to the unsafe premises hence making the students lack where to use. They instead share the boy's toilet

#### **Hygiene of the Washroom Facilities**

Apart from Kitagobwa and Bule primary schools, the other 8 schools had clean washrooms. Girls at Nkokoma reported they were happier using the washrooms than before. Senior lady said cases of UTI infections have greatly reduced among the girls since hygiene improved.

Three schools (Bule, Kitagobwa and Ntolomwe) still have water challenges in terms of access. They do not have a water source in the school campus but rather fetch from community wells which are distant.

For Bule primary school, the washroom is encroached by community members especially when learners are away. The school has no perimeter fence to prevent the community from using the school washroom. This had made cleaning the washroom challenging and tedious for the learners. MHM club members in 8 out of 10 schools continue to mobilize learners to clean washrooms periodically following cleaning rosters.

### **Materials the Schools Are Using in the Washroom**

8 of 10 schools had sanitary pads in the washrooms. Kitagobwa and Bule had no pads in their washrooms but emergency pads were kept with the senior woman and senior man. This is due to the fact that the washrooms were inaccessible for Kitagobwa and open to the community for Bule primary school respectively. Schools had adopted the idea of emergency uniform for menstruating girls. 6 schools out of 10 had emergency uniforms available.

### **Number of Trainings Done by Senior Teachers**

On average, 3 training sessions were conducted in the month of June per school apart from lwamasaka who hadn't conducted any training. The school management was faced with a challenge of learners being behind the syllabus and having to catch up. This left no time for the trainings.

Children reported having received trainings about body changes (4schools), personal hygiene (8 schools), how to make pads (6schools), reducing stigma(7 schools) and laughing after girls(4 schools).

### **Activities Conducted by Club Members**

MHM clubs were still active in all the 10 project schools. MHM club activities are always spear headed or taught by the senior man and senior woman teacher. Club members understand their individual roles especially in keeping washrooms clean, making pads, supporting fellow learners during menstruation and reporting bullies to the teachers.

### **Pad Making in Schools**

A total 85 reusable pads were produced from the 10 project schools in the month of June. Butende produced the highest number (16) by the date of monitoring while Nawango and Kitagobwa had produced none. The two schools were still learning how to use the sewing machine after failing to get a volunteer to train them like the other schools



Interaction with the MHM club at Butalunga P/S



Engaging Senior Teachers at Nkokoma primary school



Team leader conducts refresher MHM training at Butalunga



Washroom at Butende



Nawango Washroom



Monitoring senior man's activities in Nkokoma




Senior teacher showing training schedule at Bule



Monitoring washroom at Kiwala





Washroom at Kayenje P/s	Interaction with senior teacher at Kitagobwa P/s	Monitoring pad making at Ntolomwe P/s
		
Pad making refresher training at Ntolomwe P/s		

### Challenges.

- Lacking enough materials for making pads in schools. Teachers advised to engage parents during PTA meetings to support the cause.
- Some schools lack enough water. These schools need more tanks for keeping water so that they get more water for the school. (Bule, Kitagobwa and Ntolomwe)
- Busy schedule which leads to fewer MHM trainings (Iwamasaka and Nawango)- Senior teachers encouraged to create time however short.
- Washroom at Kitagobwa inaccessible due to an adjacent toilet that collapsed
- Inadequate user material such as soap, pain killers and emergency knickers.

### 4. Happy pad promotion centre (Butambala)

Pad production for sale is still pending finalisation of packaging by the team leader.

23 trainees were trained including 5 community members (3 female , 2 male) and 18 trainees (14 female and 4 male) from Butende and Ngando enrolled and completed training in June

### Stock

	APR	MAY	JUNE	Total
Pad Production	97	60	65	222
Pad sales	0	0	0	0
Pads donated to schools	70	30	45	145
Accumulated Total (stock in this month)	27	30	20	77

### Training

	Number. of Trainees (Students)	Number. of Trainees (Non-students)	TOTAL
Up until last month	10	5	15

This month	18	5	23
Total	28	10	38

### Letters from trainees

My name is Namutebi Mariam. I am 13 years old. I am in primary seven. I have learnt how to sew and how to make pads. I thank aunt tailor and VOTU who has taught me all those things. I study from Butende Umea primary school. I come from Lwangiri  
May Allah bless you

My name is Ainekiconco Aisha. I am in primary seven, I came from Lwanjiri, I am fourteen years old. We learnt how to make pads at the training centre thanks a lot VOTU team for loving us may God bless you.

My name is Nampijja Shakira I am in primary seven, I am 12 years old, I have learnt how to make pads. thanks

My name is Nakyeyune Lairah, I am in p5 .am from Butende UMEA primary school. Thanks VOTU for what you are doing in the lives of the young generation may Allah bless you all.

### 5. MHM Online Discussion preparations

A two-hour online discussion is planned to take place on the Saturday 22/07/2023. The topic of discussion will include; “The role of different stakeholders to the Reproductive Health Education for the Youths.” A draft of the power point presentation has been prepared and shared on email for members to supplement and mobilization of potential participants has been done. These include; the Programs Director Kasenyi Church of Uganda, Project Officer, Rural Health Care Foundation Uganda among others. The flyer about the online discussion has been shared on the various digital platforms as well including; WhatsApp groups, Facebook, and twitter handle.

### Positive influences of all activities

- Listeners to the radio talk shows appreciated SORAK for the project work which has greatly improved the standards of the schools for Mubende.
- Some schools like Gwanika and Jinja Karoli located in Mubende and Wakiso districts respectively accessed a second sewing machine in addition to the one that was provided by the project in order to enable more learners to have access to the sewing machine during the trainings in how to make use of the machine and reusable sanitary pad making.
- Learners at the respective schools are willing to learn how to make reusable sanitary pads including both male and female.

- Teachers in some schools have become experts in the use of the machine and making reusable sanitary pads and they are training learners in that regard for both Mubende and Wakiso.

### **Challenges**

- Fabric/material remains a challenge during pad making trainings (Wakiso and Mubende). Parents are encouraged to contribute 1,000UGX/ every term to cater for buying material.
- Transfers of teachers is still going on which affects project implementation 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.
- Some schools were doing mid-term exams and some others preparing football and net ball competitions. Learner who crosscut as MHM club members and active in sports missed our interactions.

### **Lessons Learnt**

If learners have access to more sewing machines, a big number of them can have the potential to make reusable sanitary pads.

### **Recommendations**

There is need for more sewing machines to enable a big number of learners to get the skill of reusable sanitary pad making.