

JICA Monthly Report August 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. Happy pad promotion centre (Butambala)
4. Conduct project monitoring with the GBN team

### **1. Radio talk shows**

#### **In Mubende**

A talk show was conducted in a duration of one hour at Luna FM located in Kibalinga sub county on 28<sup>th</sup> /August/2023. The respective schools were appreciated for the commendable job regarding the implementation of the MHM project. The major findings from the monitoring visit with the GBN team were shared with listeners including; the ability to make reusable sanitary pads by the learners in the beneficiary schools, improved hygiene for the learners, male involvement in MHM issues among others. Parents were encouraged to be supportive towards availing material used for making reusable sanitary pads in addition to ensuring the safety of their children during holidays.



Project officer shares major findings from the project monitoring visit with the GBN team

#### **In Wakiso**

A one-hour talk show was conducted at Tiger FM on 31/August /2023 beginning from 7:00pm to 8:00pm. The Executive Director took listeners through the project overview and the achievements attained so far in reflection to the major findings from the project monitoring with the GBN team including the ability to make reusable sanitary pads by both

female and male students in the project beneficiary schools, improved knowledge regarding MHM issues by the students, teachers and the parents of the project beneficiary schools. He appreciated the good working relationship between the Municipal Education Officer and the project team as one of the main contributing factors towards the successful implementation of the project activities in the project beneficiary schools. He encouraged listeners to make use of reusable sanitary pads as ever which are cost effective and eco-friendly. He urged parents to take good care of their children during holidays.



The Executive Director during the radio talk show at Tiger FM

**In Butambala**

A talk show was conducted at Voice of Butende on 5<sup>th</sup> August, 2023 at 3.40pm, the main topic of discussion was to emphasize the continuity of using the reusable sanitary pads and how to maintain proper menstruation hygiene. As well as introducing the team from GBN to the community, who thanked the community for accepting to promote the ongoing program.



**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: Spot messages that were aired where about Menstrual Hygiene Management, girls’ education and Happy pad friendly reusable sanitary pads. 21 spot messages were played at Voice of Butende and 21 were played at Voice of Kikambwe respectively.

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

At the promotion center which was accomplished by VOTU through GBN funded by JICA. With an objective of improving school educational environment for adolescent girls by addressing menstrual hygiene challenges in Uganda.

On 6<sup>th</sup> August 2023 VOTU hosted GBN as their normal routine of supervising and monitoring our activities. We took them through the process of making a reusable pad and how its packaged, stored and distributed to the users. We updated them about the different trainings we have been having with the community and they had a look at the training attendance register.

On 7<sup>th</sup> August 2023, VOTU and GBN hosted JICA. They visited the promotion center, they had a look at the finished products and the various activities running at the promotion center. The JICA and GBN team had an interaction with the girls and had direct feedback from them regarding the reusable pads.



A total of 42 girls were trained in the month of August, .550 reusable pads were produced and 420 reusable pads were sold for the month of August.(Accumulated number of produced pads 1021, Donated pads 100, sold pads 442)

### 4. Conduct project monitoring with the GBN team.

The GBN team arrived in Uganda on the 29/07/2023 with the aim of monitoring the progress of the project implementation in the three districts of Mubende, Wakiso and Butambala as detailed below;

#### Mubende

The GBN team by names of Miho Yokota and Maiko Ohnishi arrived in Mubende on Sunday 30/07/2023. On Monday 31/07/2023, joined with a camera man, the team was received at SORAK offices for preparations for field work. The team first had a brief meeting before heading to the field. The projects manager welcomed the team and updated them about the day's program. Three schools including; St. Mary's Gwanika, Dyangoma and Kasasa Primary Schools were visited on that day, St Mary's Kiyita, Kabowa, Ikula and Katega were visited on Tuesday 1/08/2023. On Wednesday 2/08/2023, the team visited CAWODISA and Christ the King Primary schools as detailed below;

GBN team at SORAK office before the school monitoring exercise



GBN team at the SORAK offices



Group photograph

GBN team during the school monitoring exercise



Group photo with the MHM club members at CAWODISA P/S



Group photo with the MHM club members at Katega P/S



Group photo with MHM club members at Ikula Primary School



Group photo with MHM club members at Kiyita Primary School



Group photo with MHM club members at Kabowa Primary School







Group photo with MHM club members at Dyangoma Primary School

**Wakiso**





On the 4/08/2023, the GBN team and the SORAK team held a meeting with Mr. Lwanga the Municipal Education Officer (MEO) at his office at Nansana Municipal Council and thereafter the team proceeded with the field visits to the four project schools. The objective of the meeting was to get feedback from the MEO regarding the project and to inform him about the field monitoring visit to the project schools.

In attendance were, the Project Officer for Wakiso (Sseggirinya Francis), Projects Manager (Namirembe Aisha), Assistant finance officer (Lutabi Juma). The GBN General Secretary (Miho Yokota) and the Chief Executive Officer (Maiko Ohnishi) .Our monitoring team visited 7 schools including; Maganjo UMEA, Jinja Karoli, Ssanga, Ssayi Bright and Buwambo C/U Primary Schools, Lwadda primary school, Kitungwa PS on the 4/08/2023, and 9/08/2023.

	
<p>Team meets with the MEO</p>	<p>Group photograph</p>
	
<p>During the meeting with MEO</p>	<p>A request for continued collaboration by GBN with the MEO</p>

**During the schools' monitoring visit**

	
<p>Group photo with the MHM club members</p>	<p>Group photo with MHM club members at</p>

at Maganja UME	Lwadda C/U P/S
	
Group photo with MHM club members at Sssanga C/U Primary School	Group photo with MHM club members at Ssayi Bright Primary School
	
Group photo with MHM club members at Jinja Karoli P/S	Group photo with MHM club at Kitungwa P/S

- The GBN team arrived at VOTU offices on 05 and 06/08/2023 and had a brief meeting discussing about the ongoing two-year project and thereafter the members continued for a monitoring visit in the schools of Butalunga C/S: The team was warmly welcomed and as soon as we arrived, we went straight to the changing rooms to check on their status thereafter the team held a brief discussion with the pupils, senior woman/man teacher and the head teacher about the ongoing MHM project where they shared with pupils about challenges and benefits ever since the start of the program and also were interested in knowing about how far the learners had learnt in the making of the reusable pads.
- On 07/08 VOTU and GBN received visitors from JICA and visited Butende Umea and Nkokoma C/S. On arrival to the school, the team with the teachers went to check on the status of the changing rooms thereafter had discussions with the senior woman/man teachers and pupils from the MHM club about the ongoing MHM project. Lastly on the same day VOTU and GBN visited Bule Umea, Kayenje C/S and Ntolomwe Umea checking on the completed hanging rooms thereafter held discussions about the ongoing implemented MHM project.



Butende headteacher giving remarks before the JICA team.



Ntolomwe MHM club making pads and their Washroom maintenance.



VOTU, GBN and JICA arrival at Butende Umea, JICA team arrives at VOTU Offices.



Pupils making reusable pads during the monitoring visit.

### Key findings from the monitoring visit for Mubende, Wakiso and Butanbala

- On average at least each school has two learners who are well conversant with making reusable sanitary pads.
- Learners know how to manage themselves during menstruation periods.
- Girls are no longer shy about issues of menstruation and they freely request support where need may arise.
- Boys are supportive and no longer tease girls.

- e) Teachers use the MHM booklet and teachers' training manual during MHM sessions.
- f) Schools have emergency pads which are used by learners during menstrual emergencies.
- g) The hygiene of learners has generally improved due to the fact that they are taught how to clean themselves during the guidance and counselling sessions.
- h) Some schools have emergency uniforms like Kabowa Primary School in Mubende whereas others like Dyangoma in Mubende are planning to have them available in order to support girls during menstrual emergencies while at school.
- i) Girls no longer miss classes due to issues related to menstruation as they get the necessary support at school.
- j) The project has reduced on the money spent on buying pads at school and at home as learners in the different schools revealed that they use the pads which they make.
- k) Some learners consider the skill of sewing as one way of being economically empowered in future for Mubende and Wakiso.
- l) There is increased replication in the making of the reusable pad among the pupils.
- m) Most of the learners were no longer spending money on buying disposable pads.
- n) A lack of materials for making reusable pads were still a major problem to most schools.
- o) Ntolomwe Umea was the only school that had a changing uniform which is kept in the changing room in case of any emergency.

### **Meeting with the Ministry of Health officials**

The meeting was conducted on 10/08/2023 where the GBN team, project team from Butambala and Wakiso met the Ministry officials with the aim of updating them about the progress of the project and come up with a way forward.

The following recommendations were arrived at;

- Formation of a steering committee comprising of members from the two mother ministries that is Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health and district officials where the project is currently being implemented not forgetting the implementers of the project and other stakeholders to oversee the smooth running of the project.
- GBN team to share their email addresses in order to be invited every last Friday of the month in meetings with the technical working groups. The team should have a clear presentation about the project for effective participation.
- Encourage schools to have talking compounds about MHM as one of the sensitisation strategies.
- Utilize media space like radios, Television, and social media platforms to advocate for MHM
- District leaders should not only be part of the project but have to own it in order to ensure sustainability of the project.



- Schools should have suggestion boxes to help learner express their needs



GBN and VOTU team with Dr. Allan Kasozi at ministry of health

### **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 and Wakiso.
- The beneficiary schools were eager to receive the GBN team during the project schools monitoring exercise in Wakiso and Mubende.
- The MEO promised to work towards ensuring the continuity of the project and he appreciated the GBN team for the initiative at Wakiso.
- “The sewing machine motivated the learners a lot and they are now very active during MHM sessions because they always come expecting to learn sewing.” said the head teacher Lwadda C/U.
- The training with sewing machine has motivated more boys to join the MHM club at Lwadda C/U primary school hence increased male involvement in the issues of MHM.
- Happy pad packaging has really influenced the users regardless of the low turn up of the buyers at the promotion center in Butanbala.
- At Bule Umea and Ntolomwe Umea, it was noted that the boys were actively involved in tailoring and pad making.
- Butambala community is appreciative of having a chance to interact with international and local agencies during the ongoing program like SORAK, GBN, JICA and VOTU they hope to gain a lot from these agencies.

### **Challenges**

- Not all Head teachers were available during the monitoring visit in Mubenede. They had other engagements and the team did not have chance to meet them for example at Kiyita, Ikula, Kasasa and Dyangoma Primary Schools. The team met with the school deputies and the senior teachers instead.
- Acquisition of sewing machines was a key role in the provision of manipulative skill to learners though it requires a permanent technician for repairing because the sewing

machine breakdown from time to time due to the big number using them they are still learning.

### **Lessons Learnt**

- If schools have enough sewing machines, a big number of learners can have the potential to make reusable sanitary pads.
- If there is a permanent technician to cater for all the breakdowns for the sewing machines in all the schools, there will be an increased number of learners and increased reusable pads in place.
- Lack of facilitation for marketing strategies.

### **Recommendations**

- Schools should come up with strategies of acquiring more sewing machines in order to enable a big number of learners to learn how to make reusable sanitary pads.
- Need of permanent technician for repairing sewing machines.
- There should be school learning visits where learners visit other project schools located in the different districts for bench marking.