

JICA Monthly Report December 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. Follow up on the way forward arrived at during the school-to-school MHM club learning visits
4. Online session (Butambala)
5. Happy Pad Promotion Center (Butambala)
6. Future sustainability plan (SORAK and VOTU)

1. Radio talk shows

In Mubende

A talk show was conducted by the project officer in a duration of one hour at Luna FM located in Kibalinga Sub County on 18 /December /2023. Parents were encouraged to be supportive towards issues of MHM to their children who are for holidays. Learners were encouraged to be mindful of their lives and stay safe until when the studies resume. They were encouraged to be creative and utilize the knowledge about reusable sanitary pad making gained at their respective schools in order to stop them from being idle.



In Wakiso

A one-hour talk show was conducted at Tiger FM on 20/ December /2023 beginning from

7:00pm to 8:00pm. The Executive Director took listeners through the project overview and the achievements attained so far. He encouraged learners to take care of themselves during holidays with support from parents. Parents were urged to conduct guidance and counselling to their children during holidays to stop them from acquiring unnecessary pregnancies not forgetting provision of MHM support towards their children.

In Butambala

VOTU members carried out this exercise on 5/12/2023 in both the Radios, voice of Butende and voice of Kikambwe to know how the re-usable pads have benefited the girls and other community members and most people’s response were as follows:

- Reusable pads have reduced on the number of school dropouts.
- It has promoted saving. This is because these pads take a longer period of time.
- It is also environment friendly. This prevents pollution of the environment.

During this session the parents really thanked VOTU and all of their team for helping their girls. Even those girls who participated in the training at the training Centre also aired their happiness in the voice of Kikambwe and voice of Butende. They were really grateful for everything VOTU is doing in their lives.

	
<p>One community member (Mr. Sentamu joseph) With VOTU members (Adam and Atala Christine)</p>	<p>Atala Christine and Adam explaining the benefits of reusable Pads.</p>



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:
 - Voice of Butende 10 times in the morning and evening hours. (5times morning and 5 times evening)
 - Voice of Kikambwe also 10 times both evening and morning hours (5 times morning and 5 times evening)

3. Follow up on the way forward arrived at during the school-to-school MHM club learning visits

In Mubende, one of the ways forward from the school-to-school MHM club learning visit was to carry on with the trainings in reusable sanitary pad making during holidays. The project team made a follow up in order to find out progress in that regard. All schools reached out to, including; St Mary's Gwanika, Dyangoma and Kasasa noted that they will kick start the process in the second week of January 2024.

In Wakiso, the respective senior teachers from schools like Ssayi Bright, Sanga and Kitungwa Primary schools noted that, they were planning to engage learners in the second week of January 2024 regarding re-usable sanitary pad making.

In Butambala, VOTU carried out the review after the school-to-school visit but most students had gone back home for holidays so we invited pupils to come to the promotion Centre for more trainings on how to make reusable pads.

4. Online session (Butambala)

A 6th online discussion was conducted on Friday 01/12/2023. The topic of discussion included; "A discussion about gender inequalities in schools." A total of 23 participants from different institutions turned up including a religious leader, teachers, program directors, project officers, parents among others.

Based on the feedback of participants, the discussion they liked the most were:

"Gender Equality with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) Education."

"The discussions on equal access to education. However the most interesting is the emphasis on STEM. It already sounds like education will perpetuate the continuation of inequalities."

"Solutions to gender inequalities"



5. Happy Pad Promotion Center (Butambala district)

At the training Centre December has been the busiest month because most students have been in for holidays. This made them to come for training at the Centre regularly.

The number of trainees reduced in the fourth week because most people travelled for festive session (Christmas and New Year eve). This week the production was low due to fewer number of people in the training Centre. This month we managed to train 38 people in the promotion Centre. We also managed to produce 672 pads. The production was a little bit high due to the frequent coming of the once who made these pads and they were very excited because of the work they have done.

Among 672 pads, 50 sold during festive session and 200 given to our trainees to use and advertise among the communities. (Cumulative total since March 2023 / 2,228 pads were produced, 350 donated, 552 sold)



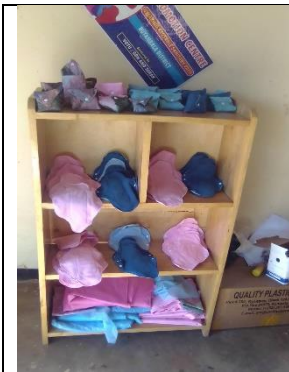
Trainers learning how to make pads



Trainers sewing pads



Nakato showing the trainers how to make and sew pads using the sewing machines



Challenges

- Our 4th week of December was affected by the festive session hence making production low.
- Long distance faced by our trainees for example those from Butende they walk long distances in order to reach the promotion Centre.
- The trainees are complaining of lunch this is because some of them come in the morning and go back home in the evening so they would prefer if given lunch at the training centers.

- Due to trainees being many the machines at the training Centre are not enough.

Lesson learnt

- The girls from many different types of schools in Butambala came and learnt how to make pads. Mostly the holiday makers from other schools.
- The community members are becoming more interested in our products.

Recommendations

- More sewing machines are needed at the promotion Centre so as it is enough for everyone.
- Other trainees were suggesting of lunch being provided to them so as to make them learn very well.

6. Future sustainability plan (SORAK and VOTU)

■ SORAK (Mubende and Wakiso)

The project is highly sustainable in the following ways as SORAK shall continue working with schools, by implementing related and reinforcing projects:

- SORAK will conduct regular monitoring of targeted schools in order to check their progress and performances.
- SORAK will continue conducting radio talk shows and airing spot message Spot messages about Menstrual Hygiene Management, girls' education and reusable sanitary pads in order to educate communities.
- Schools are using and have adopted to washrooms specifically for girls when in their periods these will continue because they are a necessity and being supported by the entire school communities.
- Schools that were given one machine for pad making have bought more for doing other activities like training more children, out of school community, which is done at a fee. Thus, schools will continue pad making and other sewing activities.
- Teachers, school managers and parents have made the innovations introduced by the project part of the school routine activities like during weekly guidance and counseling sessions which are also part of the school programs as advised by the education policy in Uganda. Thus regular guidance and counseling sessions would be continued.
- Sorak has gained support for water project and most of these schools will benefit from a 10,000litre tank capacity. The basis of selecting these schools is that we wanted to support and push forward MHM with easy access to water. We shall be supporting 28 school this year 2024. This is support from Rotary clubs from USA. Thus MHM related activities would be conducted even after the project period.

- Also each school management agreed to make cash contributions from parents for buying materials and other needs like soap etc from MHM. This would help MHM activities to be continued.
- For Wakiso, we want to do a project on ending school based sexual and gender-based violence and we shall give first priority to MHM schools in addition to surrounding communities for sustainability reasons.

■ **VOTU(Butambala)**

We discussed about the sustainability of the project in Butambala district and decided to do the following in order to sustain the project.

- Frequent monitoring of schools in order to check their performance.
- Invitation of many trainers at the promotion centre so as the trainees become perfect in pad making.
- Frequent advertisement to the public through spot messages and radio talk shows in order to attract the public towards our products.
- Giving out pad samples to the community for free in order to lure them to buy our products.