

GBN Monitoring Visit Report 2024
Improving schools' educational environment for Menstruators:
Addressing menstrual hygiene challenges in Uganda

Reporter: GBN Programs coordinator, Emmanuel Wagaba

- **Date:** 2024 April 21-26
- **Locations:** Mubende District, Wakiso District, and Butambala District
- **Participants:** GBN Representatives, GBN program coordinator (local member), 2 JICA Representatives, Uganda Ministry of Education Officials, District Education Officials (Mubende, Nansana, Butambala), School Representatives (Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers, Senior Women Teachers)
- **Executive Summary:** The GBN JICA monitoring visit assessed the progress and impact of the MHM project in three districts of Uganda. The project, which focused on teaching girls to make reusable sanitary pads and providing changing rooms and education (MHM, Gender awareness, and sexuality education), has seen notable success in improving girls' menstrual hygiene, school attendance, and academic performance. However, challenges remain, including machine maintenance, ensuring project continuity beyond external funding, and scaling the project to reach more schools. The visit highlighted the need for continued government support, community engagement, and resource allocation to sustain and expand the project's impact.

【Project Impact】

- **Positive impacts:** Increased awareness of menstrual health among students and teachers, improved school attendance and retention, enhanced confidence in girls, and the acquisition of vocational tailoring skills.
- **Challenges:** Limited resources for project expansion, machine maintenance issues, early marriage rates affecting girls' education, and the need for broader gender awareness education.

● **School-Specific Observations**

<Mubende District>



◆ Gwanika Primary School: Strong club participation, additional machine acquisition planned, ongoing tailoring training by a local tailor.



◆ Kasasa Primary School: Limited club activities due to administrative changes (three head teachers in 2 years) and lack of parental support.



◆ Dyangoma Primary School: Successful project sustenance through income generated from a school coffee farm.

<Wakiso District>



◆ Maganjo Umea Primary School: Challenges with organizing a large student population for activities and maintaining the changing room.



◆ Kiroro Primary School: Progress hindered by administrative challenges and extreme weather damaging buildings.



◆ Kitanda Primary School: Experienced a head teacher transfer. The outgoing head teacher effectively briefed the current head teacher about the project, demonstrating a model for sustainability and continuity despite teacher transfers.

<Butambala District>



◆ Bule Umea Primary School: Exemplary school with a refurbished changing room.



◆ Butende Umea Primary School: Highly active school participation.

District and Ministry Perspectives:

<Mubende District> Meeting with Senior District Education Officer and Senior inspector of schools



Mubende District local government: Acknowledged project success, highlighted challenges of expansion and sustainability, and suggested annual training sessions for underperforming schools.

<Wakiso District Place: Wakiso Nansana Municipality> Meeting with Education Officer



Nansana Municipality: Expressed gratitude for the project and emphasized the need for more resources, especially water facilities.

<Butambala District>

In a meeting with the Senior Probation and welfare Officer, recognized the project's positive impact but noted the limited scope. Suggested project extension to other schools.

In a meeting with the District Education Officer, recognizing that sustainability is key to long-term impact, the official expressed his commitment to addressing challenges such as teacher transfers. He praised the project's positive outcomes and encouraged GBN to explore expansion and resource mobilization to ensure the continued success of MHM initiatives especially in Butambala

<Ministry of Education>

In a meeting with the Director Basic Secondary Education, highlighted the importance of girls' hygiene and the project's crucial role in addressing it. While acknowledging the need for broader MHM education in the national curriculum, they noted current limitations in government resources and urged GBN and JICA to continue their partnership, emphasizing the key role development partners play in ensuring the success of MHM and gender awareness initiatives. The ministry also introduced the team to **the Gender Unit**, where a brief meeting led to an invitation to join the technical working committee to better understand potential avenues for collaboration.



Ministry of Education and Gender unit members

【Recommendations】

- Expand project reach: Develop a proposal for project expansion to include more schools in the three districts and potentially nationwide.
- Address maintenance needs: Establish a system for regular machine maintenance and repair, possibly through partnerships with local technicians.
- Strengthen community engagement: Develop strategies to engage parents and communities in supporting MHM initiatives within the bounds of government policy.
- Advocate for curriculum integration: Continue dialogue with the Ministry of Education to advocate for the inclusion of comprehensive MHM and sexuality education in the national curriculum.
- Secure long-term funding: Explore diverse funding sources, including government allocations, international donors, and corporate social responsibility initiatives, to ensure the project's sustainability beyond the initial funding period.

【Conclusion】

The GBN's MHM project has demonstrated significant potential to improve the lives of girls in Uganda. With continued support, innovation, and collaboration, the project can be sustained and scaled to create a lasting impact on menstrual hygiene and girls' education nationwide.