



NOVEMBER 2023
A REPORT FROM THE SCHOOL TO SCHOOL MHM CLUB LEARNING VISIT FOR
MUBENDE AND WAKISO
IMPROVING SCHOOLS' EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ADOLESCENT
GIRLS BY ADDRESSING MENSTRUAL HYGIENE CHALLENGES

In Wakiso

Introduction

The school-to-school MHM club visit was carried out on 16/11/2022 at Ssayi Bright Primary School. Four schools including; Kitungwa C/U, Kitanda C/U, Kirolo UMEA and Ssayi Bright Primary School participated.

<p>Participants during the learning session</p>	<p>Experience sharing about how to make pads By club member Ssayi Bright</p>	<p>MHM club club President for Ssayi Bright shares her experience</p>
<p>Experience sharing from the Senior lady Kitungwa P/S</p>	<p>Practical Session of the pad making process by the MHM club members for Kitanda AND Ssayi Bright P/S</p>	<p>MHM club member Ssayi Bright shows the participants the bag used for keeping the pads made at school</p>

Objective

The objective was to share experiences among participants to guide implementation of project activities

The proceedings of the school-to-school MHM club learning visit

A total of 30 participants attended the event and these included 24 learners of which 7 were boys and 17 were girls. 5 teachers participated including one male. Each visiting school had 3 representatives. That is a senior woman teacher and two learners.

The event was conducted for two hours with the following agenda items; opening remarks given by the senior lady of Ssayi Bright. She welcomed all the guests and thanked SORAK for choosing her school as the host of the school-to-school visit.

The Project Manager gave a brief back ground of the project. She explained the purpose of the school-to-school visits as part of the project activities with the aim of benchmarking good practices for to inform project implementation. She later invited the different teachers to give their experiences of how they implement the project, achievements and challenges faced. From these others would pick lessons learnt.

Experience sharing from the different Schools.

- Senior teachers informed the meeting that there is a positive impact as a result of project interventions in the respective schools where the boys are supportive and they happen to be the best performers regarding pad making at Kitanda and Ssayi Bright P/S because they have interest in acquiring the skill, girls are no longer shy when it gets to issues of MHM.
- In schools like Kirolo UMEA, they always use the machine for pad making and when it is down, they use hands as well in order to ensure the availability of pads at the school. Community members at Kirolo UMEA always approach the school requesting to have services in pad making.
- The Senior Teacher Ssayi Bright noted that the school has a tailor who is facilitated with transport on every Thursday of the week to take learners through the pad making sessions, in that regard, there are two boys who belong to P.5 who are well versed with pad making and button pressing in addition to the MHM club president who is a female. The three students teach their peers on every Wednesday when the tailor is not around.
- The schools had a similar mode of conducting MHM trainings as they all had a time table for the MHM club activities. However, Ssayi Bright had better pads because;
 - The head teacher facilitates a tailor with transport to come and help the learners each time they are having the pad making sessions on every Thursday of the week.
 - Learners who have mastered operating the sewing machine help others who are interested during the time of Physical Education and sacrifice playing for sewing,
 - A good number of parents are supportive when it comes to their children learning how to use the sewing machine.

- Constant supervision by the senior woman teachers.
- Repair of the sewing machine is prompt and it is usually the needles that brake. So spare needles are always available to ensure continuity.
- More emphasis is put on learners in lower classes of p.4 and p.5 as they have more time in school to help others in the years to come.

The challenges in the different schools included

- Scarcity of water except Kirolo UMEA who have a borehole at school.
- Sewing machines are few compared to the number of learners who are willing to learn.
- Some parents at Ssayi Bright whose learners are weak academically were suggesting that they should only come to school to learn how to operate the sewing machine. They have been advised to let them not drop the studies as they are as well relevant to them.
- The senior lady at Kitanda lacks a proper storage for the pads and she keeps them in the bookshelf with the books. She was advised to make a bag where pads can be kept.

Way forward

- A need to continue with such activities like the learning visits in order to enhance continuous learning.
- Head teachers should try to involve parents to support in providing materials used during pad making.
- Pad making should always be done by both sewing and hand making.
- Access to the sewing machine should be for a few learners in a particular class at a time as others perfect measurements and cutting to ensure proper learning.

Lessons learnt.

- The learners realized that what they are doing at their respective schools is what is happening elsewhere.
- With more practice learners can get better with sewing.
- Learning is faster if one is taught by a specialist or professional.
- Learners realized that becoming better at sewing require much dedication and practice.
- Where there is commitment, learners can easily get the skill of pad making using hands and the sewing machine

In Mubende

Introduction

Ten public Primary schools in Mubende district have been implementing MHM activities since January 2022 including; rehabilitation of WASH facilities, training learners in MHM, formation of MHM clubs and reusable sanitary pad trainings among others. The schools include; Christ the King, Kasasa, Kasaana, Kabowa, CAWODISA, St Mary's Gwanika, St. Mary's Kiyita, Dyangoma, Ikula and Katega. The report details proceedings from the school-to-school MHM club learning visit that took place at St Mary's Gwanika Primary School on the 13th/11/2023.

		
<p>The Vice President St. Mary's Gwanika shows his peers how to make the pad</p>	<p>Participants during the session</p>	<p>Opening remarks from the Head Teacher St. Mary's Gwanika</p>
		
<p>The Senior Man Helps learners to demonstrate how best they can protect their peers during menstrual emergencies</p>	<p>Expereince sharing by the MHM club Vice President for Kasasa Primary School</p>	<p>Expereince sahring from St Mary's Gwanika club member</p>
		
<p>The Senior Teacher St.Mary's Kiyita shares experience about pad making</p>	<p>Experience sharing by the Senior Lady for Kasana Priamary School</p>	<p>Expereince sharing by the Senior Man CAWODISA P/S</p>

Objective

To benchmark and come up with improved methods and ideas of implementing project activities in the respective schools.

The proceedings of the school-to-school MHM club learning visit

The different project schools including; St Mary's Kiyita, Kasasa, Kasana C/U, CAWOISA, Ikula and Katega Primary schools converged at Gwanika Primary school. The schools were represented by the Senior teachers and a minimum of two MHM club members including the President/Chair persons and their assistants/vice. The total number of participants included 32 i.e., 12 female students, 9 male students, 9 female teachers and 2 male teachers. Worth noting is that Gwanika Primary School was selected to host the learning visit because their performance regarding implementation of the project activities is commendable.

The activity was conducted in a duration of two and a half hours in a participatory manner guided by the day's program which included; an opening prayer from a volunteer, welcoming remarks from the Head teacher Gwanika Primary School, objective of the learning visit by the projects manager, experience sharing from the different senior teachers, experience sharing by the different MHM club members, experience sharing from Gwanika Primary School and way forward as below;

Attendance of participants

Students	Female teachers	Male teachers	Total
21	9	2	32

Welcoming remarks

The Head teacher Gwanika Primary School welcomed participants and appreciated SORAK for the support extended to the different project schools. She encouraged learners to be attentive in order for them to be in position to disseminate the lessons learnt to their colleagues as they go back. She informed the meeting that, one of the biggest challenges that the school used to face was the lack of material used for making pads. It was solved by involving parents whereby, each parent was encouraged to contribute 1000UGX/ every term to cater for buying material and 40% had complied hence the challenge was solved there and then.

Objective of the learning visit

The projects manager informed participants about the different project activities that are being implemented in the different project schools including the project goal and the objective. She noted that the purpose of the visit was to enable participants to pick lessons from the experiences of the different schools to enable them come up with new ideas of improving on implementation of the project work as they go back to their respective schools.

Experience sharing from the different Senior teachers.

The Senior woman teacher for Kasasa noted that the school provides MHM sessions and it is reflected on the time table and in the work plan. The sessions are conducted for one hour on a weekly basis after class but the only challenge is limited time but plan to have more sessions during holidays. Two girls and one boy were selected first of all to learn the entire process of pad making who will teach the rest in return and the process is moving on well.

The school requested some of the MHM club members who belonged to Primary Seven and were well conversant with pad making to always turn up during holidays to train their peers to also get on board. Important to note is that most of the students especially the MHM club members know how to make pads.

The Senior Woman Teacher for Katega noted that, the project activities are in progress at the school and the girls are now free and no longer shy to request for support related to MHM issues unlike before the project. They know how to make pads and enjoy the sessions. Emergency pads are available at school unlike before.

The challenge faced is limited time as the school runs a line of activities but they plan to engage the learners during holidays.

The Deputy Head Teacher/Senior man CAWODISA informed the meeting that, at the school, he himself has tailoring skills in addition to two students including one girl in P.6 and a boy in P7 who had the skill right from their homes. This simplified the process of pad making during the year. The two learners got the skill of pad making quickly and would take their peers through the process, The learners have learnt that issues of MHM are normal and now free to discuss them. Learners make pads but the challenge they faced was fixing the button on the pad and in response they came up with a design which does not require putting a button and it has worked well. The school always has reusable sanitary pads made by the learners.

The Senior Woman Teacher for Ikula Primary School noted that; learners are able to make pads and are no longer shy when it gets to issues of MHM.

The school requested learners to inform their parents about contributing towards maintaining the pad making process at school. One thousand shillings (1000/=) was collected and it was used for buying a tape measure.

Boys and girls are always joined together during MHM sessions and this has made boys to be supportive towards issues of MHM.

The Senior Woman Teacher for Kasana Primary School noted that, they always refer to the MHM

booklet to implement the project activities at the school.

They ensure that boys are involved in all the activities and this has greatly helped to change their attitude towards MHM whereby, they are supportive where need be.

Pad making is in progress and the learners enjoy the sessions especially the boys but the challenge was how to do finishing to make the final product of the pad. She noted that through the learning visit, she has learnt how to do the finishing which they are going to implement back at their school.

The Senior lady for Kiyita noted that, the project activities are moving on well at school and there is a lot of impact on the learners whereby, hygiene improved and discipline.

Pad making is also in progress though with a few challenges of lack of material but the MHM club members contribute 1000UGX/ each per term in addition to the support from the Head teacher. The money collected is used for buying threads, needles, material used and repairing the machine.

The Senior Woman Teacher for Gwanika noted that, the project activities are moving on well at the school but the main challenge faced was the lack of material used during making pads, in that regard, during the parents' meeting, the Head Teacher informed the parents about the problem. The meeting resolved that each and every parent should contribute 1000UGX/ every term towards buying material for pad making. Parents are responsive and so far, 40% had already made the payments. The problem came to pass. The tailor's stipend is generated from making uniforms whereby, it was agreed during the parents' meeting that all the parents should buy the uniforms from the school.

The challenge is that the tailor got another school where he offers his tailoring services and he no longer spends most of his time at school as before. This is solved by training a selected number of learners who train their peers in return during his absence.

The tailor also grouped learners into different groups and are taught at different timelines. This has also helped to reduce on the congestion during the pad making training sessions.

Important to note is that all the learners who experience menstruation have a pair of pads made at school by themselves. There are emergency pads readily available at the school.

Experience sharing from the different MHM club members regarding their responsibilities at school

Club members from the different schools shared their experiences about how they carry on with the club activities in their respective schools for shared learning as follows,

- a) The Vice President Gwanika Primary School is one of the best performers in pad making and he had this to say, "Since there is limited time allocated towards pad making, I used to visit the tailor's place during break and lunch time and I requested him to take me through because I was eager to learn. That is how I made it," In that regard, he informed his peers to be focused in case they want

to learn.

He requested for a reusable pad making competitions with an accolade at the end as one of the approaches to entice learners to learn how to make pads,

- b) One of the MHM club members from St. Mary's Gwanika noted that, the tailor made a time table which they follow. He allocated different tasks to five different groups who attend the training on the different days from Monday to Friday and every group has expertise in a specific step. They later converge and make pads as required. This helped to reduce on the congestion at the tailor's place.
- c) The MHM Vice President for CAWODISA noted that, he takes time to mobilize boys and sensitizes them on issues to do with MHM with focus on not teasing girls in case of any menstrual emergencies. This has stopped the vice of teasing girls at the school and boys are supportive.
- d) The Vice president for Kasana noted that, she encourages the learners to be free and consult her in case of any menstrual emergencies. Once they consult her, she supports and monitors them in order for them to feel free and join the rest for games or accordingly given the prevailing situation.
- e) The club president for Kasasa noted that they conduct the tasks of the club in group and boys are now supportive regarding issues of MHM. She noted that before the project intervention, most of them were green about issues of MHM. She encouraged her peers to always sensitize others and not be shy.
- f) The rest of the learners mentioned the usual activities of cleaning the washroom, compound, availing water at the washrooms among others.

Given the different experiences, it was discovered that learners have knowledge regarding issues of MHM unlike before the project intervention.

In addition to the learners' experiences, the Senior man teacher for CAWODISA Primary School shared a technique of how to protect one during the menstrual emergency by standing behind that person after notifying her of the situation and they escort her to the washroom in order for her to clean up. He encouraged the boys not to exceed the limits while providing support to the girls regarding issues of MHM.

Way forward

- Schools to utilize the parents' meetings to mobilize for funds to be used for maintaining the pad making processes.
- The Senior woman teacher for Kiyita to work closely with the Vice President St. Mary's Gwanika to learn more about how to make the final product of the pad (finishing) without using an overlock machine.

- Conduct an inter school MHM club competition in order to encourage more learners to learn how to make reusable sanitary pads.
- Schools to utilize the MHM club members who belonged to Primary Seven and were well conversant with pad making to train their peers during holidays who will later be in position to make pads without necessarily involving the tailors.
- Senior teachers to ensure the availability of emergency uniforms with different sizes at their respective schools for use by the learners who encounter menstrual emergencies.
- Participants to come up with action plans on how they are going to improve the implementation of project work in their respective schools.
- Students to disseminate the knowledge acquired during the visit back to their respective schools in order to benefit others that did not make it to the meeting.
- Where there are no buttons, they can always use the option of the new design which does not call for the provision of the button, as done by CAWODISA P/S.

Positive influence

- Participants were eager to learn from one another and were able to share their views in a participatory manner.
- The host school was well prepared to take others through their experience in implementing the project activities.
- The Head Teacher for St.Mary's Gwanika noted that there is one of the girls who had dropped out of school due to lack of school fees but the parents were forced to bring her back because of the tailoring skills taught at school. The girl is now back to school and in P.6.
-

Challenges during the meeting.

- Time management was poor as the meeting started late due to the fact that some participants came late due to the heavy rain but project team waited for them to arrive to start off the meeting.
- Most of the MHM club members who were well conversant with MHM issues had left school for their vacation as they belonged to Primary Seven. Other MHM club members from other classes turned up.