



NOTHING CAN STOP MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AND SCHOLASTIC MATERIALS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES



ACTIVITY REPORT

NOVEMBER 2022

BACKGROUND

ASA is a Community Based organizations founded in 2017, and legally registered as a CBO with Reg No: 088, in 2019, we advocates for the rights of Disabled children and youth by supporting reverse inclusion in sports-a system in which abled bodied persons play and enjoy sporting activities alongside their disabled Counter parts. Besides sports ASA also supports inclusive education were we enhance the capacity of children to be PRESENT in school, PARTICIPATE actively and ACHIEVE at the end of their education.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTIVITY

ASA organized an online fundraising in the month of September 2022 to support children with disabilities from three inclusive primary schools in Gulu (Gulu Prison Primary, Gulu primary school and Laroo primary school) with relevant skills of making reusable sanitary pads and provision of scholastic materials for 30 vulnerable children and support the blind annex with learning materials that can enhance the performance or blind children in Gulu District.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTIVITIES

- To enhance the capacity of 30 girls with and without disabilities with relevant skills of making reusable sanitary pads.
- To produce 1000 sanitary pads within the three different schools in Gulu.
- To provide scholastic materials to 30 children with disabilities and directly support the blind annex with learning equipment's.
- To raise awareness on menstrual hygiene to lower and upper classes girls within the three schools.
- To create three health clubs who will be responsible for production of the pads.

PROBLEM WE WANTED TO ADDRESS.

Often children with disabilities and other vulnerable children(Girls and orphans) do not have access to sanitary pads while at school, they resort to using old clothes, which has affected their concentration in school, often a number of girls drop out of school because they have no access to pads, lack knowledge about menstrual hygiene and the stigma they face from boys within the schools, Our girls with disabilities face triple discrimination of being a disabled, woman and gender stereotypes.

We fundraised through our different online platforms and managed to raise 4, 160,000/= Ugx equivalent of 900 Pounds

Gulu Primary School

This is one of the traditional inclusive in Northern Uganda which has an annex for blind learners, and children with physical disabilities in the school. On 18th Nov 2022 our team through funding support from the online campaign we launch the Nothing can stop me menstrual hygiene activities , A total 300 girls from Primary four to primary seven participated in the 3 hours awareness program on menstrual

hygiene, we had 2 volunteers (Anzo and Happy) from WER WA DANCE group who supported in the creative arts part of the activity.

The girls from the school were made aware of the following

- Education on the menstrual hygiene cycles.
- How to use a menstrual pad
- How to maintain good hygiene while in periods.

A total of 10 girls (2 Disabled, 8 abled bodied) were successfully trained on the skills of making reusable sanitary pads.

The 10 girls formed the menstrual hygiene club for the school, they are now responsible for providing pads, creating awareness on menstrual hygiene, producing 300 more pads, and to offer guidance and counseling to their peers.



Girls from Gulu Primary School attending the awareness on menstrual hygiene.

Provision of Scholastic materials

Many children with disabilities still struggle to get access to scholastic materials while at school, ASA through the donations we supported 28 children with visual impairment, 13 children with physical disabilities and 10 girls who participated in the menstrual hygiene training received, Books, Pens, mathematical sets, bags etc.

Quote from Ogen-rwot Martin Daniels 14 years P.5 class, a child living with Visual impairment, " We never had cubes in other classes but thank God we already have one that will help us learn better



VI children lining up for a group photo in front of their classroom after handover

Quote from

I would like to thank the ASA of this great initiative I used not to think that I can make sanitary pads but today I made one and I will continue to teach others in our communities said by Akello P.6 class.

GULU PRISON PRIMARY SCHOOL.

GPPS is one of the government headed inclusive primary school in Gulu City with an annex for children with learning disabilities, mental disabilities and children with autism, on 16th November 2022 ASA team organized for the training for 10 girls with and without disabilities on hands on skills of producing reusable sanitary pads for the school, The school has a total of 600 children of which 38 are children with learning disabilities.

They study in segregated education system where they learn differently from others, This education system does not give opportunities for CWDs to socialize with others and it has encourage more stigma and discrimination in the school however ASA is tackling this through introduction inclusive programs in the school. Among this activities are inclusive games and sports and inclusive training in sanitary pads and formation of hygiene club in the school.



A total of 13 girls got training in the menstrual hygiene and 4 female teachers were there to support the girls, before the training was done the team started with awareness creation and sensitization on

menstrual cycle and hygiene measures, 180 girls from primary 5 and 6 attended the awareness program which lasted about 3 hours.



13 Girls from GPPS participating in the training.

Quotes.

This is what I love most; it's something that I relate with. Brenda loves to saw and making of the pads has given her the confidence of contributing to her friends and colleagues in school and community.

Provision of scholastic materials

Children with learning disabilities, autism and mental are usually not valued at all level starting from home to school, they lack scholastic materials such as books, pens and mathematical sets, and we realized 12 children out of 38 did not have any form of scholastic materials; therefor we had to support them with scholastic materials to start school in 2023.



12 children with learning/mental disability received their scholastic materials from ASA team.

Quotes.

This is a great initiative that ASA has brought to our school for the past 10 years girls where not sensitized on issues concerning menstrual hygiene.

LAROO PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Laroo primary school is one of the segregated primary school for children with hearing impairment units; the school covers the whole west Nile region and Northern Uganda the schools serves over 20 districts across the two regions and south Sudanese in refugee settlements . The school has a total enrollment of 615 of which 180 are children with hearing impairments, spread out in all classes.

The school still faces the following challenges.

The unit for deaf learners still has limited numbers of teachers who are experts In sign language, communication skills, and the all whole school has a total of 6 teachers to teachers children from primary one to seven.

Many children are still needs of scholastic materials this because 60% the children comes from poor homes.

High school fees, which is been a big challenge many children with hearing impairment do drop out in their first year of studies, children are often sent home when their family fails to pay for their fees or other school requirements such as food items, scholastic materials etc

Training on Menstrual hygiene was done on 25th November 2023.

The school senior woman teacher who is responsible for girls menstrual health within the school helped the team to mobilize for girls in the unit and others in the mainstream classes. A total of 120 girls were mobilized and they were made aware of:-

- Knowledge and awareness on the menstrual cycles for the deaf and hearing girls.
- How to use a menstrual pads and hygiene around it.
- How to maintain good hygiene while in periods.
- To change the negative attitudes of girls towards menstrual cycle.
- Sharing of past experiences the girls had when they experienced their first menstrual cycle while at school.

The girls were very happy for the first menstrual workshop brought to them, they said this will help build in their confidence in school which will help their social interaction with boys without any form of discrimination and stigma.

A number of girls highlight that their parent often shy away to share about menstrual hygiene with them most parents say they don't have time, they are busy this had made it very hard for them to cope up during their menstrual periods.

They have the girls changing room in place and all girls experiencing menstrual period uses the changing room in school and this has built confidence and encouraged them to stay in school.



Awareness creation on menstrual periods for deaf children of laroo primary school

Training on menstrual sanitary pads

A total of 12 girls were selected to get training on production of sanitary pads for the school, all girls were interested in learning how to make one but due to resources we could not give all the opportunities, the idea share of this training was to train the 10 girls so that they can also train other within their schools and communities they come from on how to make a sanitary pad.

The aim of this training is to ensure that the girls changing room is equipped with all menstrual hygiene materials to ensure that they are set to start production of 300 sanitary pads when school open in January 6th 2023.





Girls posing with their beautifully handmade sanitary pads, they also received mathematical sets for each.

Provision of scholastic materials

A total of 14(8 girls 6 male) Children with hearing impairment were selected among the many children to receive the scholastic materials the criteria used was academic performance and level of vulnerability

most children lack scholastic materials such as books, pens and mathematical sets, to help them prepare well in 2023.

Below are pictures of children receiving their scholastic materials, handed over by Faruk to the head teacher?



Lessions learnt

- The awareness creation in the three schools has contributed to increased knowledge about menstrual cycle among the girls.
- Through our engagements with the girls we realized that parents don't have time to talk to their girls on issues related to menstrual hygiene and sex education.
- Menstrual cycle/ periods have contributed to the poor performance of girls in school compared to boys.
- Many children with disabilities do not have scholastic materials to help their learning in school.
- Only one out of the three schools do have a girls changing room in place, what does it mean, when a girl child is in periods they do stay home until her periods is done hence affecting her learning.
- We learnt that schools do not provide sanitary pads to girls and most of the pads used are not environmentally friendly.
- We learnt that we need to change the attitudes of girls towards the use of reusable sanitary pads because 60% said it's really hard for them to wash their own blood.

Recommendations/ways forward.

- More awareness creation and sensitization should be done to ensure that the girls negative attitudes and knowledge on menstrual cycle increases.
- Formation of the girl's menstrual hygiene club to ensure the sustainability of the menstrual hygiene project the different schools.
- Encourage parents to support their children with disabilities with scholastic materials.
- Ensure that school allocates girls changing rooms in the school.
- Collaborate with the schools to put budgets for materials for making sanitary pads in the school budget.