



FORUM FOR WOMEN
IN DEMOCRACY

BUILDING BLOCKS

Addressing challenges faced in Primary Education

Youth Leaders, technocrats, Councilors embrace 'Keep a girl in school campaign.'

Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) has been running a Keep a girl in school campaign with a focus on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM). The campaign advocates for the prioritisation of financing for MHM and also for the improvement of community members attitude towards girl child education. The campaign's goal is so that issues that affect girls and women are included in the budget at national and district level.

Research carried out under the Gender and Economic Justice (GEJ) program at FOWODE, increasingly highlighted that among other reasons, poor menstrual hygiene management was one of the most avoidable and yet most stated reason as to why girls eventually drop out of school. Women and girls in rural settings and in particular girls in schools suffer most from stigma, lack of services and facilities to help them cope with the physical and psychological pains they undergo during menstruation. Consequently, this leads to increased

absenteeism, poor performance, school drop outs, teenage pregnancies and child marriages. According to the GEJ program, 3 in 5 girls miss school due to menstruation, they miss at least 11% of their school time. We know that menstruation is a normal part of a girl's life, therefore menstrual hygiene is fundamental to her dignity and wellbeing. With gender responsive budgeting and a focus on practical strategies for coping with monthly periods, girls will be able to anchor their energy on attending classes and attaining good grades, a prerequisite to staying in school and eventually building them to become competent, value driven leaders.

Through radio, television and social media, the campaign is targeting community members, Ministry of Education technocrats and District Officials. Community members are encouraged to open dialogue on menstrual management, engage their leaders to budget for menstrual

management and most importantly to participate in making reusable sanitary pads. Ministry of Education technocrats and District Officials are reminded to increase resource allocation towards menstrual health management, ensure every school with female pupils has a senior woman teacher, and provide menstrual hygiene products and water in schools.

This campaign has also been embraced by youth leaders, technocrats, councilors and the community at large. These leaders also participated in the radio talk shows as a great platform to discuss the issues that affect girl child education. For example in Gulu, they technocrats participated in a radio talkshow famously known as 'The voice of women.'



Brenda Aromorach FOWODE field officer Gulu District noting key concerns from callers during a radio talk show on "Keep a Girl in School" at Choice FM, Gulu.

BUGANTIRA AND PATIKO TRAINED ON GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING GULU DISTRICT

Councillors and technocrats of Bungatira and Patiko subcounties were trained on Gender Responsive Budgeting with support from the Governance, Accountability, Participation and Performance Project (GAPP). Many have worked tirelessly to ensure that gender issues are also included in the Education sector.

Honorable Apiyo Vicky, Councilor Punena parish in Bungatira Sub County, Gulu district, during a monitoring visit by Research Triangle International (RTI) officials and GAPP officials said, "I want to extend my sincere appreciation to FOWODE for training us on Gender Responsive Budgeting last year. Most of us councilors in Bungatira did not know about Gender Responsive Budgeting and with this training, we (women councilors) have managed to move a motion in our council earlier this year to defend parents demands in Kulu Keno Primary School which was raised during a parents meeting in November 2018. The concern raised was that girls latrines were full and in bad state."

This financial year 2019/2020, a budget of 28 million has been allocated to the construction of 5(five) stances drainable pit latrines for girls in Kulu Keno Primary School and 2 stances for girls in Pageya Primary School.

The GAPP project is funded by the Research Triangle International (RTI).

[Building Blocks]

Although there has been a significant increase pupil numbers both in primary schools, the entire primary education system is still riddled with many challenges

Poor education systems severely affect the learning outcomes of poor children, and entrenches already marginalised families and communities in vicious a cycle of poverty

Challenges affecting education systems should be looked at from a sociological and economic dimension

2 Girls absent from school in a week

LYANTONDE DISTRICT



The Senior Woman Teacher of St.Pauls Bikokora showing technocrats and councilors reusable pads made by pupils and the ones they bought using UPE funds.

Almost 805 schools register at least two girls absent in a week due to menstrual hygiene management issues...

Girls find it challenging especially those getting their monthly periods for the first time. To some, it comes as a shock and if not handled with care they end up dropping out of school due to lack of sanitary materials to use.

In all the schools FOWODE works with, both in Lyantonde and Mpumudde sub counties, head teachers and senior women teachers have been trying their best to provide sanitary towels to the girls when they get into their periods during school time inspite of the meagre budgets they have to work with. However, there is a big challenge of providing changing uniforms to girls after their personal uniforms get dirty.

During all our community and interface meetings, VBCs demanded that schools come up with a budget for buying school changing uniforms to enable girls remain in school. Kabetemere primary school has already bought two changing uniforms and they put 100,000/= in their budget to add three more uniforms to meet their initial plan of having five school girls' changing uniforms at school. All other schools in our area of operations have also planned to have these uniforms due to the fact that it is now a requirement and as a result of their appreciation of the environment girls live in. Besides budgeting for the changing uniforms, in some schools, when UPE funds delay it affects the buying of sanitary pads and because of this, VBCs urged senior women teachers to find other possible means of helping girls with or without UPE funds hence leading to the training of girls on how to make reusable pads from locally available resources. This initiative has reduced on the expenses of buying disposable sanitary pads from shops. St Pauls Bikokora primary school embraced the practice and girls now make personal pads as a result, they no longer wait for the head teacher to buy pads for them.

According to the 2017 Global Gender Gap Report, more than one third of girls still marry as children, and close to three in ten girls have their first child before turning 18.

Only one in four girls will complete lower secondary school and an even smaller proportion completes upper secondary school.

Educating girls and ending child marriage are essential for girls to be emancipated as professionals and future leaders.

SHAPING THE FUTURE

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