

SUCCESS STORIES

Creating a buzz around menstrual hygiene

Menstruation often means no school or sports, and embarrassment for many girls and women in Madagascar. On March, 8th 2018, over 6 000 people celebrated International Women’s Day in Brickaville, where the RANO WASH team dared to talk about this taboo topic. We also introduced a new product an attractive model of reusable sanitary pads. More than 2 000 women from approximately 70 women’s associations visited our booth, and 19 of those associations requested a follow up discussion and training on making pads.

The RANO WASH team discussed the rights of girls and women to safe, healthy and practical management of menstrual hygiene.

Many women asked if the pads were for sale, and if they could be trained in making them.

Fanja, a high school student from Brickaville said: “I have always thought that we weren’t supposed to discuss menstruation in public. It is encouraging to hear that we can talk about it among friends and that we should not feel ashamed of it.” She then joined the RANO WASH team in raising awareness at our booth.

Rafaly, a male high school student from the same area commented: “I still do not think I would feel comfortable talking about menstruation with girls for now, but at least I can start raising awareness among my male friends to stop teasing girls about it.”

Rija, a young journalist said: “I admire the guts – usually, we do not talk about menstruation in public. But when we



Figure 21- Girls sport group after talk with CoP

think about it, it is actually the most natural thing in the world.”

A group of young girls said that proper management of menstrual hygiene would boost their confidence and comfort and allow them to play sports.

RANO WASH is excited to continue our efforts in going beyond raising awareness. We plan to hold workshops in sewing these reusable pads and exploring other inexpensive options for girls and women.



Figure 19- Regional BCC Specialist, Lova Rakotoarisoa talking about sanitary pad, Atsinanana Region



Figure 20- Above: High school student Fanja on the right asking about pads, Below: Fanja on the left drawing her ideal latrine during the world women day celebration.

RANO WASH National Launch, Who were in the room and how long did they stay?

Instead of the 100 attendees expected, more than 150 participants were present for the RANO WASH National Launch on February 23rd, 2018 at the Carlton Hotel in Antananarivo.

The event was led by the Minister of Water, Energy and Hydrocarbons. Though the Minister of Public Health was committed to participating in the RANO WASH launch, a last-minute presidential mission prevented him from being present. The SG of MoPH led the MoPH delegation. The RANO WASH donor was represented by the Acting Director General of USAID and the Director of USAID Health-Population-Nutrition Office accompanied by other USAID members.

The attendance and participation, and the presence of high personalities from the two sectors and the donor from the beginning until the closure testifies the RANO WASH's aims to improve Health, Nutrition and Environment in rural communes of Atsinanana, Alaotra-Mangoro, Vatovavy Fitovinany, Haute Matsiatra, Amoron'i Mania and Vakinankaratra regions through improved, sustainable and professionally managed Water supply, Sanitation facilities and Hygien.

The honorable attendance counted the WASH, Health, Nutrition and Environment stakeholders and medias.

The former US CARE USA Water team Director was present at the event and expressed how amazed was he to see the commitment of the Minister of Water, Energy and Hydrocarbons. Not only did he arrived on time to open the event, but he participated in all activities during the launch and stayed there until the closure of the celebration. That is sign of his leadership and ownership of the WASH sector and the result of the cooperation lobbying made by RANO WASH CoP.



Figure 22 Very dynamic attendees during the question and answer session, RANO WASH National Launch