

RHRP NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the first issue of Empower Tanzania's Reproductive Health and Relationships Program (RHRP) newsletter. This will be issued monthly to keep you up-to-date with the program's progress, provide additional information, as well as a few extras.

WHAT'S NEW?

It's been a busy start to the Reproductive Health and Relationships Program. Since we all met in September, 177 primary teachers and 264 secondary school teachers (including ToTs) have been trained in 19 Same schools. This is AMAZING.

Additionally, we have completed the initial testing of the students. This gives us a baseline to compare to when we repeat the tests at the end of the year. The Empower Tanzania staff has been hard at work inputting all that data into spreadsheets. Those spreadsheets are then sent to a statistician and researcher in America (John Peden and Joanne Chopek-Foss) who will analyse the numbers and produce a report.

Empower Tanzania staff have also been working hard to secure funding to continue this program past the first year. So far, we are positive but lots more work is needed. All of us working together make a powerful team!



SPOTLIGHT:

We want to know about you!

We would like to include a spotlight section on someone each month. Send us your stories of teaching the sessions and a little bit about you ... you could see yourself here next issue!



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This section is designed to answer some of the questions we have received about the program.

Q: I have been asked a reproductive health question I cannot answer, what should I do?

A: No one can know everything! We are here to help and support and have a huge network of professionals we can get the answers from including doctors, nurses, counselors, and religious leaders. Contact us and we will provide you with an answer. Let the young person know that you will find out the answer, and make sure you follow it up next session.

Q: Can a male teacher teach about menstrual products?

A: Of course. Make yourself comfortable around the products before the session and research how to use and wash the kits. However, we understand some teachers may not feel comfortable at first. If this describes you, maybe have a female teacher in the session with you to help you teach the students this important material. You can learn with this approach as well!

Q: I am struggling to deal with my emotions about a child's abuse, what should I do?

A: It's completely normal to feel empathy for the child and anger towards the perpetrator. However, it's very important to look after yourself. Speak to us, if we cannot help, we can listen and provide you with contacts who can provide you with counseling. Discussing the situation helps. Try to share your thoughts with your fellow colleagues, many are probably feeling similar. It's also important to find things to do that help you to relax, whether it's listening to music, walking, or other activities. If you are struggling, please don't hesitate to contact us.



NOTES FROM DR. JEFF

We are excited about your work in the Reproductive Health and Relationships Program (RHRP). As you know, this education will teach young people important relationship skills and accurate information about sex. Dispelling the many myths surrounding sex is part of that educational process, so don't be shy about asking questions. Our staff can help you find answers to questions you are unsure about. Just give us a call or send an email or text.

Please expand your work beyond the students to include parents and other community members. The education you provide them can change lives and societies. Everyone needs to know that reproductive health education has been shown to:

- >Reduce adolescent pregnancies
- >Reduce sexually transmitted diseases
- >Delay sexual activity onset in young people

Parents also should understand that teaching young people about reproductive health has been shown to make them **LESS LIKELY** to have sex, not more likely.

As teachers, you have an immense impact on the lives and futures of your students. Our job is to facilitate your important work. Please let us know how we can help!

FOCUS SECTION:

We want to focus on one topic each issue to provide additional information. These are picked at random, but if you have a request, please contact Jessica!

OTHER EMPOWER TANZANIA PROGRAMS...

In this section, we want to let you know about some of the other work Empower Tanzania is doing. You are now a part of something much bigger.

Reusable menstrual kits (RMKs) are a type of reusable feminine hygiene product that are an alternative to disposable sanitary pads. The low cost kits contain pads and a moisture-proof barrier that protect a girl through an entire menstrual period and are washed in preparation for the next cycle. Through the ages, women and girls often use folded old cloth (rags) to catch their menstrual blood. Empower Tanzania, in collaboration with Days for Girls, has trained 10 groups who are survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) to sew re-usable menstrual pad kits, which are then sold to women and girls in Same District and nearby regions. The kit includes two moisture-proof shields, 8 soft, absorbent liners, a plastic bag for used pads and a cloth bag to carry the pads. They can be hand washed and dried in the sun and generally last for 3 years. The 10 GBV groups make the kits and 33 Community Health Educators in another Empower Tanzania program sell the kits to the community. They also provide health education to raise awareness about menstruation, which is still often considered a taboo topic. RMKs will enable girls to continue their schooling with dignity and confidence.

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MEET THE TEAM

In this part of the newsletter, we would like to introduce you to the team, one person at a time. This issue features Catherine Wales, the lead of the RHRP.

CATHERINE JOHN WALES

Health Programs Coordinator



My name is Catherine John Wales. I have been working with Empower Tanzania since May 2017 as the Health Programs Coordinator. I also work as the Reproductive Health and Relationship Program Manager. I hold a bachelor degree of rural development from Sokoine University of Agriculture, I also hold a diploma in development planning and a certificate of rural development planning from the Institute of Rural Development Planning. Previously I have worked with Word Vision Tanzania as a Resilient Livelihood Intern.

My main interest is to work with needy communities—especially the marginalized groups—to help, support, and find solutions together to their main challenges and problems.

CONTACT US:

If you have a comment or suggestion about the newsletter, please email Jessica at jhaw1@gmail.com with the subject title "Newsletter."

If you need any help with a teaching issue, please contact Catherine at catherinewales17@gmail.com or Yoeza at yoeza1mnzava@gmail.com



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TANZANIA**