



SCHOOL HEALTH CLUBS

A vibrant platform for improving sanitation and hygiene practices in primary schools.



Health club member Joyce Juma demonstrating the importance of hand washing before eating.

"We had no idea how we can easily change our school in terms of hygiene and sanitation. Through our health club, it has been possible."

Madam Nyakwisi Charles
School Head Teacher

Overview

Poor hygiene and sanitation practices are common in many schools and communities in Tanzania, exposing vulnerable children to diseases that ultimately affect their school attendance and academic performance. Despite the fact that water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are part of a national guideline that instructs schools to have a school water, sanitation and hygiene (SWASH) or health club in place, in many schools these clubs have never been formed or are not actively meeting.

In collaboration with district authorities and school administrations, PCI Tanzania, under the USDA-funded International Food for Education and Child Nutrition (MGD) program, implemented a wide range of activities that aimed at institutionalizing sustainable school health interventions. To that end, PCI facilitated the formation of school health clubs across the program area to promote good health and hygiene practices among primary school students.

To strengthen these health clubs, PCI compiled health, hygiene and sanitation education sessions from national WASH guidelines and other evidence-based school health curricula to be led by health teachers and volunteer student aids (VSA). The sessions are delivered through discussions on various topics and delivery of key messages, games and plays, songs, and local posters designed with health messages. The club members and other students have learned about personal hygiene and sanitation, particularly with regards to proper handwashing practices, environmental health and proper use of latrines. These



Ryamisanga Primary School, with a total of 873 students and located in Butiama District, is one of many primary schools reaping the benefits of school health clubs.

sessions have profoundly changed the health club members' health and hygiene behaviors both at school and at home, mostly related to personal hygiene, school sanitation practices, and in the way they motivate others for behavior change.

and for purchasing the necessary cleaning materials. Health club members teach other students how to properly handwash; advocate for clean latrines and safe drinking water; and enhance health and hygiene messages across the school through direct participation in activities such

health environment and proper handwashing. This health club has been paramount in improving school health and hygiene infrastructure, including four handwashing stations in the kitchen and toilet premises, fixing seven local litterbins (four are placed outside classes and three in teachers' office), and the club has made two drying racks for school feeding utensils.

"I'm honored to be part of the club and a leader at the same time for this club. We have been exposed to many different topics such as personal hygiene and environmental sanitation. This club has been strategic by using different club members to pass on messages to our colleagues across the school and our families. Yet, as club members, we are privileged to have slots during the school 'baraza' to present our messages through plays, dramas, songs, and poems."

Simon Chacha, a grade student and club chairperson

Club members have been outstanding ambassadors both at school and in their families, promoting the learnings of preventative health. They have played an integral role in reminding the school management committees of their responsibilities for creating a positive school environment for health and learning,

as peer-to-peer education, as well as arranging and following the latrine cleaning timetable. Under the supervision of a health teacher and VSA, the health club at Ryamisanga Primary School has designed and displayed six pieces of local artwork with different messages on the school

PCI Tanzania is collaborating with the Government of Tanzania's National School Health Program Unit to finalize and launch Tanzania's first National School Health Program Guide and Manual. The objectives of the Guide and Manual are to operationalize the National School Health Policy and standardize a comprehensive school health and nutrition curriculum for use in primary school classrooms and health clubs throughout the country.



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