

IAW Newsletter March 2023

Planning - learning - trying - networking

Even with a lot of planning things very often turn out differently than expected. The IAW colleagues involved in the WP project know this particularly well!

For them, it is always a matter of looking for new ways to achieve their goals when facing completely unexpected obstacles.

So due to a brutal military attack Anuarite Siirewabo from SOFEDEC in DR Congo was unable to hold her planned WP event at the Mapendo School in the city of Goma, last November.

Instead, A. Siirewabo right away got involved in emergency relief for the displaced women and children in the affected neighbourhood. The booklets about menstruation were distributed among the girls living in emergency shelters. These unprotected young women can gain some self-confidence thanks to some basic knowledge about the biological cycle.



A.Siirewabo during emergency relief actions



Joyful play with traumatized children

Now, only three months later, SOFEDEC is again planning their regular WP activities in another school at Goma.

Trying new ways and networking - this is especially true for our WP colleagues in Cameroon.

Since the start of the WP project in 2017 Rebecca Juga, the coordinator of the IAW organisation BAWUFAG situated in the Bali area of Northern Cameroon wanted to participate. But due to the permanent cruel attacks of military gangs the schools got closed in 2018. Consequently many inhabitants of this dangerous region had to flee, and by now quite a large Bali-community has settled around Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon. Now at the new place Rebecca Juga and her colleagues of BAWUFAG definitely wanted to start some WP activities,. Rebecca could soon establish good contacts with Akam bilingual academy, a primary and secondary school in a low-income area of Yaoundé.



Rebecca Juga



Meeting the director of Akam bilingual academy

Fortunately Rebecca could also soon get in touch with two IAW organisations based at Yaoundé. Catherine Aba Fouda, Coordinator of RENATA welcomed Rebecca at her office and gave her a lot of helpful WP information. Also, Anne Yotchou of CEFAP was very happy to have another IAW colleague close by – an excellent networking.

With this new situation at Yaoundé we felt that we could try to get our educational booklets printed on site.

In fact this is an important point for the sponsors of the WP project, because the production on site can promote some local value creation. We already had a successful pilot-project last year. In fact the costs for the printing at Harare in Zimbabwe had been very reasonable thanks to the clever negotiations of Rita Marque Mbata, Coordinator of WCCF.

So our small working group “WP booklet” with Heidi Bodmer, Pascale Vallée, Anne Yotchou and me met in January 2023 by Zoom. It was so lucky having Anne with us, because she right away tackled the issue with much zeal. She coordinated everything with her colleagues: the amount of booklets each one needed, getting a favourable price and finally organizing the distribution. It all worked out perfectly.

Rebecca could collect her share just in time before the start of her WP-activities. In Cameroon the schools like to have special events at this season, because of their national youth-day on 11 February. We are congratulating Rebecca for the huge success she had at “her” school.



«ABCs of being a Girl”, the booklets are ready at the printer’s shop



Anne Yotchou (left) and Catherine Aba Fouda with booklets intended for RENATA

Later on Catherine met Anne and got the booklets intended for RENATA.

This is an excellent incentive for us to promote local printing everywhere else in future!

The WP project is also developing well in other places. Despite of all the difficulties, Goma Bastola, Coordinator of RUWON Nepal has managed to hold her event planned for 2022 right at the beginning of January 2023. The WP project was welcomed with a high interest by the teaching staff at Bal Uddhar Secondary School, a high school at Katmandu. The lecture had been prepared together with the teachers. It was decided to also involve the boys in some ways. This turned out to be very successful, because now there is more mutual respect. At the same time, a sample kit of reusable sanitary pads was distributed to the girls. This is to make it easier for the students to be clean.

Unfortunately, there are many other problems in Nepal. Because of the massive poverty, the parents as well as the school can hardly afford clean drinking water, so the school children are often thirsty.



Bal Uddhar Secondary School at Katmandu, Nepal



Teacher showing a pad.

Should the boys also be present at the WP events?

Completely independent of the success in Zimbabwe and now Nepal, Thérèse Akakpo, Coordinator of LA COLOMBE, has also had positive experiences at the Complexe scolaire Le Guide at Vogan. A health expert was participating at the WP event. Questions about sexually transmitted diseases were also discussed here. Everyone realised how important it is to act responsibly - and here, too, the schoolgirls have gained a lot of self-confidence!



WP Activities at Complexe scolaire Le Guide, Vauban, Togo



09.03.2023 Ursula Nakamura, Co-Coordinator IAW Water and pads project