

FIT FOR LEARNING

FFL Social Strategic Plan

2014-2024



Fit For Learning advocates WASH BRUSH SMILE in urban and rural Malawi

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Fit For Learning (FFL)¹ is a foundation established in December 2014, Company Registration no: 14122, in the Companies Act. The Registered Office of the Foundation shall be situated at Area 12/2, Lilongwe, Private Bag B 392, Lilongwe 3, Malawi. FFL is a non profit NGO.

Introduction

Malawi, in East Africa is one of the poorest nations in the world (WHO, 2014). Among the many problems that exist in a poor country, the poor health condition of schoolchildren, deserves more attention. They suffer continuously from child diseases that challenge their physical, mental and social development. Ignorance of this problem contributes to stagnation in the countries progress in all fields. Information and practical approaches that can improve schoolchildren's health is lacking. One way to handle this problem is to inform all levels of the society and collaborate with local communities to stimulate and enable them to take matters in their own hands.

The main purpose of Fit For Learning (FFL) is, by stimulating local communities, parents and teachers of primary schools, to install the WASH BRUSH SMILE program with healthy school activities and creating a healthier environment for the children. By doing so, they can achieve control over improving conditions which encourage them to sustain their activities and obtain ownership of their school health program.

¹ The FFL Foundation has the following Board members:

Flexony Sibale, Senior Educational Advisor, Chairperson; Martha Chizuma- Mwangonde , Legal Advisor, Vice Chairperson; Dr Jessie Mlotha- Namarika , Chief Dental Officer, member; Hendrix Ngazi Nkunika, PTA representative, member; Martha Muthali, Teachers representative (MoEST), Member; Dr Sytse Fluitsma, Advisor Dentist, Founder FFL; Ms Bernadetta Fluitsma, Supportive Advisor, Founder FFL; Mr Enock Phale , Representative (MoH), Founder FFL

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Vision, mission and objective of FFL

Vision

To contribute to the school going children's brighter future by promoting healthy lifestyles in school through creating conditions for daily healthy activities

Mission

To create conditions in school premises in collaboration with teachers and parents (via the Parent-Teacher Associations - PTA's) which enables healthy activities at school as daily routine to become a habit for the children

Main objective

To reduce the incidents of common child diseases such as diarrhoea, pulmonary infections, soil transmitted helminth (STH) infections (worms) and tooth decay through installing a school health program, called: WASH BRUSH SMILE (WBS).

This WBS school health program comprises 2 daily activities:

1. washing hands with soap
2. brushing teeth with fluoride containing toothpaste

And one bi-annual activity:

de-worming with albendazole tablets

With this school health program, FFL aims for obtaining better health of school-children in order to reduce school absenteeism and improve cognitive capacity.

(See for comparable school health program www.fitforschool.ph)

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The strength of Fit For Learning

We believe that an active health intervention, with active participation of the PTA's and local communities, can stimulate more parents to send their children to school and finish their primary education. At present the drop-out rates are very high.

The WASH BRUSH SMILE (WBS) programme, is to enhance the existing programs, whereby the most relevant part of WBS is to stimulate behavioural change, by implementing WBS as daily routine exercise as an essential part of the school curriculum.

Daily teeth brushing with fluoride toothpaste and hand washing with soap are integrated into the children's normal school day in the form of group activities. The children are also dewormed twice each year. These daily routines have a lasting effect on hygiene practices and supplement traditional forms of health education, which are based on knowledge transfer only. The programme also involves improving water supplies and sanitary services, in particular through the installation of hand washing stations. Improving access to water and providing sanitary facilities suitable for children in the participating schools create a healthy school environment which is essential for improving long-term health.

The most prominent change in delivering Wash Brush Smile is the major role that the community is given. The PTA, parents, and the children themselves are the basis of the program, they have the ownership of it.

The role of the FFL team is to assist school communities to install WASH BRUSH SMILE. Provide them with instruction materials, assist them in building the wash installation, ensure that consumables are present and to monitor the progress of the programme.

Activities

The planning of the project is divided in three phases:

1. advocacy and feasibility study (2014-2015)
2. capacity building (2016-2017)
3. spreading WASH BRUSH SMILE nationwide (2018-2024)

1. Advocacy and feasibility study (2014 and 2015)

Advocacy

The advocacy process in Malawi's government on the concept of WBS as a bottom up horizontal approach in schools, are in contrast to incidental existing vertical approaches which are directed to only one single disease entity. This advocacy process has been successfully concluded and approval has been obtained from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to initiate a pilot study on FFL in two primary schools, to see whether the WBS approach is feasible or not.

Feasibility study

Two schools for the feasibility study have been indicated by the Ministry of Education.

A prerequisite condition for the initiation of WBS in these 2 schools is:

- The provision of information on health, hygiene and sanitation issues in the nearby community of the school
- Collaboration with teachers and parents (via the Parent-Teacher-Association, the PTA) for the creation of facilities to carry out the program

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- Collaboration with teachers and parents to secure a smoothly daily routine running of the Wash Brush Smile programme
- Collaboration with local officials of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to secure awareness of developments
- Installation of a guidance committee, with representatives of the Ministries (Guidance Committee: Dr Sytse Fluitsma, Dentist, Founder FFL; Mr Enock Phale, Min of Health, Ass. Director, Founder FFL; Mrs Fiona Nguluwe, Min of Education, School Health Nutrition (SHN); Mr Doubt Kajirime, Lilongwe College of Health Sciences; Mr Fred Sambani, Teethsavers International, NGO; Mr Precious Phiri, Min of Health, Preventive Health Services)

In furtherance of the foregoing activities, FFL will:

- Seek mutual co-operation support and understanding between and among Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) in Malawi especially those with comparable objectives
- Collaborate with International Organisations with goals similar to the FFL Foundation
- Foster facilities such as clean water, proper sanitation, school meals and food supplements and proper school furniture
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2. capacity building (2016-2018)

The Foundation Fit For Learning can start to develop the WASH BRUSH SMILE campaign, at several pilot schools, the training of health workers to spread the WBS principles, the development of training materials for learners, teachers, parents and communities, and the nationwide promotion of WASH BRUSH SMILE are all part of this phase.

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At the same time we will develop a program for the Teachers Training Colleges where the future teachers learn that WBS is part of their training, and part of their professional career.

3. spreading WBS nation wide 2018-2024

In this phase partnership with a large organisation is needed. Reason for that is that FFL will not have the capacity to run a nation wide operation by itself.

The future role of FFL will be an advisory one and they will be monitoring activities and also be active in the promotion of WASH BRUSH SMILE, in the Central and the Southern part of Africa.