



Private Bag B392, Lilongwe Area 47 Sector 3 Plot No. 168

Cell: +265 0999 925 338, +265(0) 992 286 500/ +265 (0) 995 499 444

Email:smfluitsma@gmail.com/oliverndhlovu@yahoo.co.uk

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REPORT ON THE WASH BRUSH AND SMILE TRAINING PROGRAM UNDERTAKEN BY WORLD VISION MALAWI UNDER NTCHISI AP CONDUCTED BY FIT FOR LEARNING AFRICA (FFLA) FROM 5TH TO 8TH NOVEMBER 2024

1.0 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 school children 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 country's 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, knowing that the bright future of their own children depends on themselves.

The main purpose of Fit for Learning Africa (FFLA) is to stimulate local communities, parents and teachers of primary schools, to install the WASH BRUSH SMILE program with health 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 with which ultimately achieve full potential of their children's education.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Concept

The Wash, Brush and Smile program is conceptualized on the fact that children learn better when they are healthy. The deliberate effort to make children wash their hands and brush their teeth as a habit with which they stay at school and grow up provides opportunity to the child to concentrate in class work without disturbance coming in due to avoidable illnesses that result from the incidents of common child diseases such

as diarrhea, pulmonary infections, soil transmitted helminth (STH) infections (worms) and tooth decay through installing a school health program, called: WASH BRUSH SMILE (WBS).

The children are subjected to a routine oral hygiene by brushing teeth with fluoride toothpaste and hand washing with soap each time they visit the toilet, and each time before and after they take food or play in dirty soil and water environments. This concept is deliberately targeted on junior standards one and two for easy adaptation because children maintain what they have learned while youth to later stages of their growth.

The WBS concept has been adopted from a very successful study conducted in The Philippines, Indonesia and Bangladesh where it was established and proven that children learners who were in selected schools subjected to the WBS became healthy, attended school consistently, reduced the incidents of sicknesses, and improved in class and out of class performance compared to the children from schools which were not under the WBS project.

2.2 The Goal and Objectives

2.2.1 The Goal

The main goal of the Wash, Brush and Smile Project is to promote good learning environment for school children so that they concentrate in class and improve their academic performance and achieve their education potential while also reducing the school dropout of girls and boys due to avoidable illnesses in primary education in Malawi.

2.2.2 The Objectives

The objectives of the project are as follows:

- i. To improve the education standards for standard 1 & 2 junior primary school learners in all primary schools in Malawi
- ii. To reduce disease contraction by school learners by 90% in all schools
- iii. To increase class education performance and passing rate of standard 1 & 2 school learners in all primary schools from current 40% to 75%
- iv. To reduce school dropouts for standard 1 & 2 learners and girls in all primary schools from the current 50% to 10%
- v. To improve nutrition status and increase attendance of standard 1 & 2 school learners in all primary schools so as to reduce diseases which come as a result of malnutrition and absenteeism and drop outs which result from hunger⁹
- vi. To improve school sanitation and environment so as to reduce incidents of diseases at all primary schools in the country

2.3 The Scope

The WBS project is relevant and in line with the School Health and Nutrition and WASH program in that it encourages improvement of the standards of education in Malawi considering that there has been a

remarkable increase of school drop outs, sicknesses, absenteeism and poor class performance, especially in junior primary schools due to avoidable diseases contracted by inadequate personal hygienic habitual practices. There has also been poor performance in class due to poor health of the learners. The project has targeted 154 schools in Ntchisi District with the intention of extending to other schools in the country when it succeeds in the selected pilot living schools. The project will be implemented along the WASH program being implemented by World Vision Malawi with a strong advocacy for community and schools participation and ownership. At the end of the project, it is expected that learners in standard 1 & 2 will take washing hands and brushing teeth as a habit, and improve their class performance with substantial improvement of their health throughout their education life and beyond.

2.4 Methodology which formed Training Content

- 2.4.1 The WBS project starts with orientation of the Wash Brush Smile program to District Education Offices, coordinated by the WVM Coordinators
- 2.4.2 Visitation to the selected living primary schools during which essential data is collected on the enrollments, sanitation, number of teachers available and water supply situation
- 2.4.3 Training of District Trainers (DTs) in a Training of Trainers exercise comprising the WVM and SHN Coordinators, Environmental Health Officers and one officer from water department, where they are taken through the Training Manuals which guide on hand washing and teeth brushing, with the importance of doing so explained.
- 2.4.4 The DTs in turn train a team of implementers at each school which includes 1 x **Headmaster**, all **Standard 1 & 2 teachers**, 1 x **PTA** and 1 x **SMC** representatives, and 1 x **Mother Group** representative.
- 2.4.5 Each school will be provided with **Cement** to construct wash stands on which to place **Tapped Buckets** in which will be **Water**; and **Soap** will be provided for washing hands. The community of the school will provide bricks, sand and labour for the construction of the wash stands.
- 2.4.6 Each school will be issued with **Tooth Brushes** and **Fluoride Toothpaste** for use by the children to brush their teeth and a **Tooth Brush Storage Rack on which each learners' Tooth Brush will be stored identified by his/her Tooth brush Number**, and a **Storage Cupboard in which to store the WBS materials under lock**.
- 2.4.7 Each school will also be issued with sanitation pads for use by girl learners in the Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) initiative, with emphasis that these will be samples from which to initiate learning on how the mother groups and the girls can make their own as one way of ensuring supply sustainability.
- 2.4.8 Each school will be provided with **Brooms** and **Disinfectants** to ensure adequate sanitation and cleanliness around the school premises and toilets.
- 2.4.9 The project will procure the materials and issue to the schools, with instructions, through training, on how to use them, with the understanding that the community through the **School Management Committees, Parent Teacher Associations, Village Development Committees (VDCs), Area Development Committees (ADCs) and Mother Groups (MGs)** assisted by the **Teachers** will

initiate resource mobilization to continue supplying the required materials as one way of ensuring sustainability of the program when **Donors and indeed WVM pull out from support**.

- 2.4.10 Close **Monitoring** at all levels will be done to ensure that the WBS project is implemented according to the plan and training provided, with well-drawn indicators which include: **School/Class Attendance, Sicknesses, Class Academic and Outdoor Activities Performance**.
- 2.4.11 An evaluation will be carried out to assess the project impact and to justify its possible extension to other schools in the country on a multiplier effect.
- 2.4.12 An in-depth review of the **Manual on Effective Hand washing with Soap**
- 2.4.13 An in-depth review of the **Oral Health Manual** which highlights the challenges of oral hygiene and how learners can avoid tooth decay and diseases.

3.0 Participants, Venues, Duration and Facilitators

Venue	Mpalo TDC Ntchisi	Mphangala School Ntchisi
Participants	21: PEA, Headmasters and Teachers	12: Headmasters and Teachers
Facilitators	Oliver Ndhlovu, Edward Hara, William Moyo and Martin Kumwenda	Oliver Ndhlovu, Edward Hara, William Moyo and Martin Kumwenda
Duration	2 x days	2 x Days

3.1 List of Participants:

A	MPALO VENUE		
No	Name	School/Location	Phone Number
1	Alfred Mtapanga	-	0999196176
2	Rodwell Kaliza	-	0883552707
3	Gorge Phiri	Mtambalala	0999439085
4	Alfred Kayamba	Zaoneka	0994310379
5	Gracian Banda	Chankhala	0992878858
6	Zaphaniah Samson	Chankhala	0999394448
7	Peter CP Kayaza	Mawiri	0999669007
8	Zacharia Chigoma	Mtambalala	0994809981
9	Gift Kaundwa	Mtambalala	0996472633
10	Eveless Kapiseni	Mpalo	0992191478
11	Thokozani Mazoni	Msanduliza	0992587171
12	Chance Mwale	Msanduliza	0997707636
13	Salome Banda	Chankhala	0993865844
14	Steven Chigwe	Mpalo	0993980655
15	Steve Majamanda	Mpalo	0991825031
16	Agnes Banda	Mpalo TDC	0996565666
17	Dexter P Chatchwa	Msanduliza	0991619997
18	Pilirani Chilwungu	Zaoneka	0997402065
19	Chikoza Yotamu	Zaoneka	0993583381

20	Tiyamike Mkisi	Mawiri	0996546778
21	Gift Chinthomba	Mawiri	0993761050
B	MANKHAKA VENUE		
1	Marco C Bonongwe	Kaimange	0993715569
2	Denis Chimpumo	Kaimange	0992210935
3	Ethel S Kaipa	Kaimange	0995534683
4	Yohane Mweso	Chanbawe	0993029662
5	Alick Chitanje	Chinbawe	09817200895
6	Gloria Chipofya	Chinbawe	0996416039
7	Lukas Mtalimanja	Mankhaka	0995690316
8	Yamikani mnjimbula	Mankhaka	0998826765
9	Anna Vasco	Mankhaka	0992675603
10	Symon K Mhone	Mwawaleza	099022808
11	MacDonald Lipenga	Mwawaleza	0997344269
12	Ketrina Chinda	Mwawaleza	0999139374

4.0 Next Program Plan

The WBS Program has to continue with District Development Committee orientation and then training of local communities who will ensure sustainability of the program when WVM stops supporting the schools with supplies. The local communities include **SMCs, PTAs, MGs, VDCs, ADCs, HSAs and Water Supply Agents.**

5.0 Recommendations and Way Forward

In order to have a successful implementation of the project, there is need to consider intensification of the implementation period of the Wash Brush Smile Project so that at the end of the day a meaningful evaluation of the project be made to determine its impact and possible multiplier initiative to other areas.

It would be very commendable if all parties appreciated that the project has started, though late, and build up team spirit to have it successfully adopted with agreeable changes if so required. What needs to be born in mind is that the program of Wash Brush and Smile has been well received and appreciated in other areas by both the communities and the teachers which is very good for its sustainability since it largely depends on the community participation for its successful implementation.

6.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, Fit for Learning Africa is ready to work with WVM and all relevant stakeholders in implementing the WBS project to the satisfaction of both donors and the line Ministries of Education Science and Technology and Health, and the beneficiaries themselves, and would like to appeal for concerted efforts from all relevant authorities so that the program is implemented successfully.

Fit For Learning Africa would like to thank WVM, and in particular Ireen Chongwe Waren for taking the lead in implementing the WBS program and for entrusting the training exercise to the WBS experts. It is our hope that the trust you have in FFLA will continue for the good of the children's future,

Oliver M. Ndhlovu



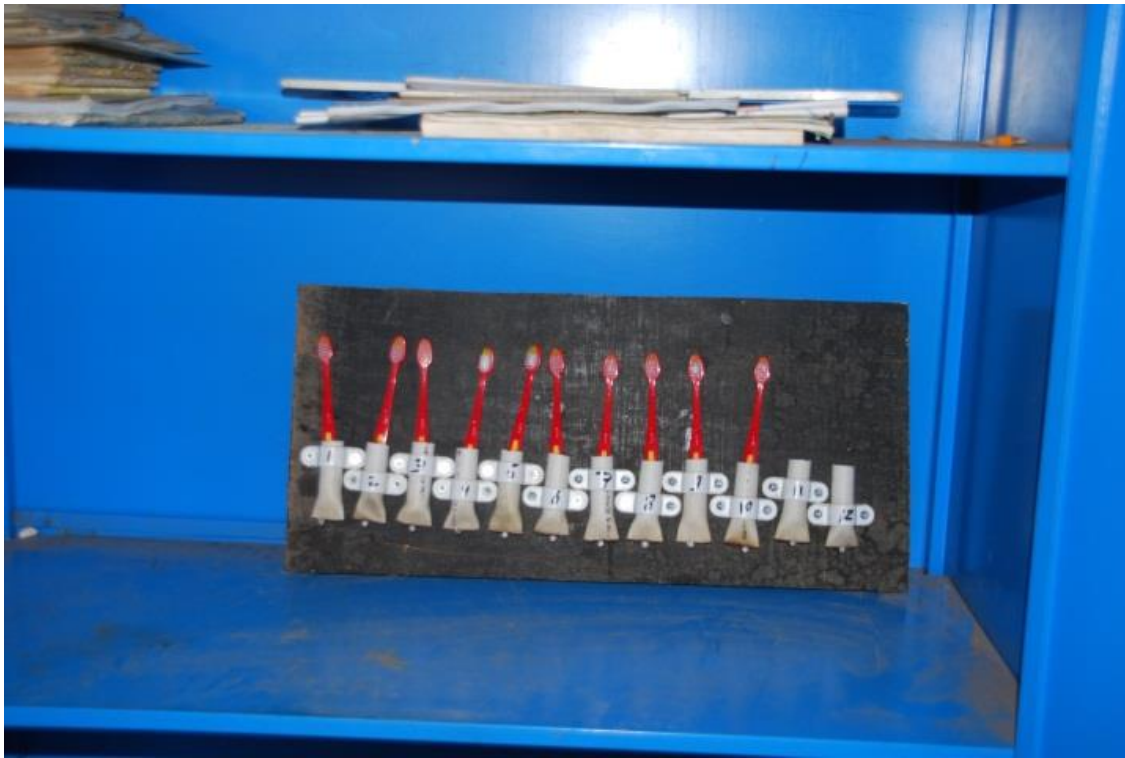
Learners Brushing Teeth with Fluoride Toothpaste



Learners Toothbrush Storage Rack with Each Learners Number indicated



Learners Brushing Teeth using Water from the Tapped Buckets Monitored by Teachers



Toothbrushes Stored on Toothbrush Storage Rack



The Concrete Slab on which Tapped Water Buckets are placed for Teeth Brushing and Hand Washing Constructed against the Wall of the Classroom



Hand-washing in progress



WBS Training Session in progress at Mpalo Teachers Development Centre (TDC)



Edward Hara doing training on WBS Oral Health at Mankhaka Full Primary School



Oliver Ndhlovu doing training on WBS Background, Concept and Procedures at Mpalo TDC