

A4D Training Session SDG 6, 5: “Creating awareness for Menstrual Hygiene Management and breaking myths”

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General background information

The following training session has been developed by a partner organisation in [Uganda](#). This Athletics for Development (A4D) session was developed to create awareness for Menstrual Hygiene Management and to break any myth regarding menstruation. It is linked to the **SDG 6 sub target 6.2 “access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene”** as well as to **SDG 5 sub target 5.6 “universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights”**. The lack of information and the continuing misconceptions as well as myths surrounding the topic of menstruation continue to shape the opportunities, health, and social status of women and girls around the world. As a result, women and girls have great difficulties to reach their full potential in all areas of life. It is therefore highly important to disseminate the required knowledge and build an environment that enables women and girls to practice safe menstrual hygiene, free of negative social norms. The session will develop the competences¹ self-confidence and trust, communication, and goal orientation which are essential for an adequate engagement with the topic of menstruation and the corresponding hygiene measures.

Target Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Age group:</i> U14; <i>gender composition:</i> mixed; <i>size of group:</i> 20 participants (can vary) • <i>S4D experiences of the group:</i> no experience; <i>general sporting abilities:</i> no regular training 		
Sport	Track and field, athletics		
Duration of the session	60 min		
Life Competences/Skills targeted throughout the training session	Decision-making, self-confidence and trust, communication, goal orientation, empathy	Sporting Competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motor competences: Coordination, speed, agility, flexibility • Technical competences: Jumping, running • Tactical competences: Working in teams, making clever choices

Key terms:² **Menstruation** is the bodily process of releasing blood and any associated matter through the vagina as part of the menstruation cycle. Despite the language throughout this session focusing on women and girls, a **menstruator** can be any person that menstruates and therefore has menstrual health and hygiene needs. This can include women, girls, transgender, and non-binary persons. **Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM)** refers to the adequate measures taken in relation to the menstrual cycle. This includes the use of clean and appropriate menstrual hygiene material to collect menstrual blood, the ability to change these in private and in appropriate facilities, being able to dispose of the material safely, to wash the body with clean water and soap as it is required, and

¹ S4D Competences should be part of every S4D Activity and S4D Training Session. [HERE](#) you can find a collection of general S4D competences children and youth can gain through their participation in S4D Activities and Training Sessions.

² **Resources:** [UNICEF Guidance on Menstrual Health and Hygiene](#); [Menstrual Health Hygiene Day](#); [The World Bank - Menstrual Health and Hygiene](#)

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finally the overall knowledge of thereof. **Menstrual Hygiene Materials** are the products used to catch or absorb the menstrual flow such as pads, cloths, tampons, or cups.

Practical Session

Have a look into the [S4D Training Session Cycle!](#)

Welcome and Introduction (5 min)

- Gather the players in a team circle.
- Welcome the participants and create a pleasant setting and atmosphere.
- **Have a look back at the last training session:** What happened after the last training session?
- **Have a look ahead to the upcoming training session:** What will happen in this session?
 - o Introduction of learning objectives
 - o Sensitisation for the topic

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Warm up: Menstrual myths

Duration	10 min
Setting	A rope is placed on the ground
Material, Equipment	- 1 Rope
Activity & Description	<p>Lay a rope on the ground in a straight line or draw a line (either in sand or with chalk on the ground). Ask participants to stand on one side of the line, all facing into the same direction. The coach explains that on one side of the line, are the “myths” located and on the other side is the “truth” located. The coach can let the participants jump across the rope a couple of times to try it out. After a couple of minutes, the coach reads out loud the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many women and girls do not have access to materials to manage their menstruation. (Truth) • Girls and women are always dirty during their period. (Myth) • Menstruation is a normal and healthy part of life for most girls and women. (Truth) • Menstruation is a sign of maturity and adulthood among girls. (Myth) • Menstruation is a disease. (Myth) • Many girls do not have a complete and accurate understanding of the menstruation being a normal biological process. (Truth) • Girls and women cannot cook, play with others etc., during their menstruation cycle. (Traditional myth) • Poor menstrual hygiene can pose physical health risks and has been linked to reproductive and urinary tract infections. (Truth) • Girls and women with disabilities and special needs face additional challenges with menstrual hygiene. (Truth)
Life Competences/Skills	Decision-making (critical thinking)

See [Structure of an S4D Training and S4D Training Session Cycle](#) to find more information about how to structure a S4D training session. To plan your own training session, you can use the [Template “Planning and Reviewing Sheet for S4D Training Sessions”](#).

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Learning Objective	The game tests the knowledge and perception of the participants in relation to menstruation.
Reflection	<p>Ask your participants...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were you able to figure out all the myths? • Have you heard these myths before in your own environment? Where do you believe these myths stem from? • Why is it important to clear up myths like these? <p>The coach can discuss each statement with the participants in depth.</p>

Warm up: Okubuuka omuguwa

Duration	10 min
Setting	Two participants hold on to the rope on both ends, 5 metres apart. The rest of the group is divided into two teams. 5-6 participants queue next to the rope, getting ready to jump.
Material, Equipment	- 1 Rope
Activity & Description <i>Resource: A4D Manual, p. 224</i>	<p>The participants are divided into two teams. Two participants hold on to the rope while one team is lining up next to the rope, ready to start jumping. Before the game starts, both teams agree on a set of points that need to be reached in order to win.</p> <p>At the beginning, participants are allowed to start jumping from the middle of the rope or enter to skip one by one. Once all participants of the team have entered the skipping area, the counting begins. For every jump, the team receives one point. If any one of the team fails to jump, the team receives a foul. The team that is able to collect the most skips/points, wins.</p> <p>The team has to be able to synchronise their movements amongst each other in order to keep skipping.</p>
Life Competences/Skills	Self-confidence and trust; communication



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Learning Objective	This game is easily played by both genders and requires teamwork in order to achieve the overall goal. Additionally, the game will encourage communication amongst the teams regardless of their sex or gender. The participants will develop a sense of belonging.
Reflection	Ask your participants...
	<input type="checkbox"/> What was your strategy in order to skip simultaneously? What would you do differently next time? <input type="checkbox"/> How were you able to communicate between all genders in your group? Were you able to observe differences? Why is open communication important? <input type="checkbox"/> Why is it important to communicate openly about menstrual hygiene? (E.g. clearing up myths)

Main Phase: Progressive Endurance

Duration	15 mins
Setting	The field is marked by a starting and finish line. Obstacles are places throughout the running track.
Material, Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 cones - 18 used bicycle tires - Marked hoops on the field - 10 cartons
Activity & Description <i>Resource: A4D Manual, p. 159</i>	<p>The participants are lined up at the starting line. On the signal, the participants start their race, trying to overcome all obstacles safely. Participants can vary in competence and speed. Everyone can be included.</p> 
Life Competences/Skills	Self-confidence and trust; goal orientation

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Learning Objective	While improving the athletic performance of the participants, the game allows all levels of abilities and all gender to take part which will increase each participant’s self-confidence. Every participant will be able to concentrate on their personal goal of reaching the finish line, trusting in their own abilities. Overall, the adaptive nature of the game will help to attract particularly female participants to engage with athletics.
Reflection	Ask the participants... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was it difficult or easy for you to overcome the obstacles? • What obstacles do you encounter when it comes to menstrual hygiene? What could help you overcome these obstacles? What role could boys play in overcoming these obstacles? • How could you become more confident in overcoming the obstacles?

Main Phase: 4 x 700m XC Relay

Duration	15 min
Setting	Mark 700m XC lap on the track, including changes of direction. Use various objects to place as obstacles along the track. Each team receives a baton they must exchange amongst their teammates.
Material, Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 stopwatch - Start/finish line - Various marking cones - Marking of exchange zone (30m) - 9 obstacles (not higher than 30cm) - 5 relay batons - Starter clapper - 1 chosen colour per team (different t-shirts etc.)
Activity & Description <i>Resource: A4D Manual, p. 160</i>	<p>The participants are divided into 5 teams. Each team chooses their own team colour. Each teammate has to complete a lap around the track with the baton and once they reach the exchanging zone, the next participant takes the baton and runs a lap. This continues until all teammates have completed the lap. The team to complete all four laps first, wins.</p> 

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Life Competences/Skills	Goal orientation
Learning Objective	The teams consist of mixed gender in which every participant has equal opportunities regardless of their gender, sex or biological changes. While this exercise will further improve athletic skills, the participants will be able to realise their own potential and learn how to focus on their own goals.
Reflection	<p>Ask your participants...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was it to complete the relay in a mixed team? Did you support each other? • If so, did the support affect your performance? If not, how did you feel? • Why is it important to support each other to achieve a common goal? • How can we support each other when it comes to menstruation? As a girl, is there anything you wish others would do to make you feel more comfortable? • As a boy, do you have any ideas about how to support girls, especially when they have their periods? And is there anything you wish others would do to make you feel supported too?

Cool Down: Appreciation

Duration	5 min
Setting	Players move around in the marked field
Material, Equipment	n/a
Activity & Description	Participants walk or moderately run around the marked area. Once the whistle blows, the participants come together into pairs. Each pair should come up with their own stretching exercises. While stretching, the participants should explain what they know about menstruation and why menstrual hygiene is important. The participants start running again until the whistle blows and find back into pairs to come up with a new stretching exercise, repeating facts they have learned about menstrual hygiene. This goes on until the coach ends the activity.
Life Competences/Skills	Empathy
Learning Objective	The participants can stretch after the session and are able to remember the different facts they have learned.

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Reflection	n/a
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Reflection (10 min)³

- sure to create an environment where participants feel comfortable to take part in the reflection and an open discussion.
- Ask whether the session was good and which part of the session was most interesting/ fun.
- Give a short **recap of the session** and ask the participants what they have learned or what sticks to their minds after the session.
- You can **ask more specifically** about what they have learned about Menstrual Hygiene Management and sports.
- Which activity of the session did you like/not like? Why?
- Where did you feel comfortable/uncomfortable and why?
- What was easy or difficult for you?
- Did you feel that everyone was equally integrated throughout all the activities?
- How do you feel about menstruation and sports, is it hygienic and proper? Do you agree or disagree?
- How did it feel having mixed gender groups discussing the topic of menstruation?

STEP 1: Reflect Ask the participants about their experiences during the different S4D Activities
Have a look into the [Reflection Guidelines!](#)

STEP 2: Connect Make a connection to daily-life situations

- What kind of Menstrual Hygiene Problems are you facing in your daily life (at school, home, with your friends)?
- In which situations are you treated differently because of your bodily changes and gender?
- In which situations do you behave differently because of your bodily changes/ menses (even if you don't want to)?
- Have you been in a situation before where boys/girls had special or different rules? If yes, which ones?
- In which situations did you feel it was easy/difficult to share emotions about your menses? What do you think about boys/girls sharing emotions in general about menses?
- What do you think about having different or special rules for girls during their menses in daily life?



Reflection (10 min)

- Gather participants in a circle and make
- What do you think about having different or special rules for girls during their menses in daily life?

³ [HERE](#) you'll find a guideline including examples of ways/methods how a reflection can be structured and how participants can be best organised.

<p>STEP 3: Apply - In your opinion, what should and could be done regarding sharing emotions regarding different/special rules, regarding Ask them about specific Menstrual Hygiene Management? actions For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can you create a safe space in which girls and boys feel comfortable to share their emotions? What do you think is important for that and how can your behaviour or attitude contribute? - Can you come up with a rule that would help overcome Menstrual Hygiene Management issues? In what parts of your life can you implement this rule? <p>STEP 4: Action Try to identify situations in your daily life where you are treated differently because of your bodily changes and gender.</p>	
<p>Agree with the - Do you agree with this treatment? participants on a - If not, try to ask the responsible person why you are treated differently. specific action/task to - If possible, communicate that you do not agree with that treatment.</p> <p>fulfil until the next Try to identify 5 situations where you are thinking twice before doing something because of your monthly period/ menses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask yourself what is holding you back and what the reason could be. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Try to challenge yourself and overcome this barrier, but only if you feel comfortable with that. <i>Make sure that every</i> 	

participant has the chance to share or say something if they want to.