



## Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust Newsletter

May Issue Volume 1, Issue 9

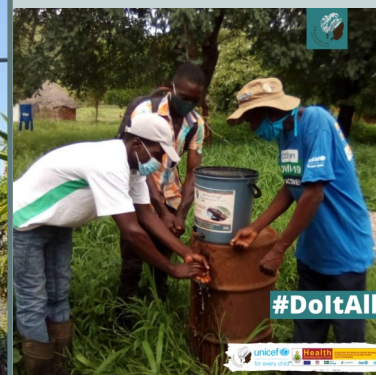
### Menstrual Hygiene Day

For some menstruation may be an inconvenience to some who don't give it much a thought. For millions of others, however, this most natural of reproductive cycle functions can mean abuse, the onset of menstruation can signal that a girl is ready for marriage and childbearing, stigma skipping school owing to pain and lack of sanitary hygiene products.

The day is observed on 28 May because menstrual cycle lasts an average of 28 days and people menstruate an average of five days per month. For AWET the goal is to progress menstruation as a biological phenomenon so that girls and young women can menstruate without feeling excluded or left out, without fear or shame, and without being treated differently or exposed to higher risks. It also raises awareness of period poverty, the inability to afford the menstrual products needed to manage health and hygiene with dignity.

AWET reaches people who menstruate with education, safe sanitation facilities, especially in marginalized apostolic communities, and dignity kits with essentials such a soap and menstruation supplies as part of its menstrual health and hygiene activities. In commemorating the [Menstrual Hygiene Day](#), AWET with the support of UNICEF has recently provided thousands of kits to schoolgirls in Shamva District.

Sharai Chamwadoro AWET's provincial focal person for Shamva, – as a girl or young woman in these marginalized areas has limited access to menstrual hygiene products...continued to pg2



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1. Menstrual Hygiene Day
2. Measles, Polio Outbreaks
3. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on COVID-19 Prevention in Schools
4. Menstrual hygiene day Commemorations
5. Community health and sanitation program

### END PERIOD STIGMA



### MENSTRUATION IS NORMAL



*...continue from pg1*

“Without income, most of the parents cannot afford to buy sanitary products unless someone gives them for free,” she said. “Sometimes girls must utilize pieces of cloth during periods, it is not hygienic or convenient, but they have no choice if they are to attend school. Without proper menstrual hygiene support, girls and women are losing their dignity.

Gracing the event AWET head of programs Hope Dunira, presented the girls with menstrual education highlighting on the importance of menstruation and why its normal for girls and women to menstruate. “Women may have health difficulties such as reproductive and urinary tract infections, as well as shame and rejection from the community, in addition to feeling like they are losing their dignity,” she said. “Furthermore, a lack of menstrual health support might impede girls’ and women’s mobility, limiting access to vital services and humanitarian assistance such as healthcare, education and livelihood possibilities.

## MEASLES, POLIO OUTBREAK

As COVID-19 continues to disrupt immunization programs around the world, putting millions of vulnerable children at risk of preventable childhood diseases, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) issued an urgent call to action to avert severe measles and polio epidemics.

COVID-19 has had a severe effect on health services on the nation, particularly immunization services. Unlike COVID, we now have the tools and knowledge to prevent infections like polio and measles. There is need for resources and commitments to put these skills and knowledge into practice, in order to save children’s lives.

There has been a resurgence of measles in recent months, with ongoing outbreaks in all parts of the world. COVID has further exacerbated the immunization coverage gaps since the time of the pandemic 2020. In 2019 the number of new cases of measles reached its highest level in more than two decades. The ministry of health revealed an alarming number in the new cases of infections in Matasa, Mudzi and Hurungwe.



**FGDs in Mutasa, Hurungwe and Mudzi**

At the same time, transmission of the poliovirus is projected to grow in Mozambique, as well as in many under-immunised areas of Zimbabwe in the surrounding areas. Failure to eradicate polio today will result in a global recurrence of the virus within 10 years, with as many as 200,000 new cases annually.

Recently, new tools such as a next-generation innovative oral polio vaccine and the upcoming Measles Outbreak Strategic Response Plan have been deployed to assist combat these expanding dangers in districts with high risk of infections as a national plan for preventing, detecting, and responding to measles outbreaks swiftly and effectively...*continue to pg3*





*BCFs conducting FGDs with Pupils in various schools*

## Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on COVID-19 Prevention in Schools

Under the Risk Communication Community Engagement (RCCE) initiative, supported by UNICEF Zimbabwe, Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust (AWET) is engaging school children in 40 districts across Zimbabwe through Focus Group Discussions. This initiative has been deployed focusing on primary and secondary school students to collect information about COVID-19 and vaccination.

COVID-19 has been with us for a while, and this winter new variants may arise AWET through Behavior Change Facilitators (BCFs) have been promoting the Ministry of Health Child Care's efforts to achieve #ZEROCVID by spreading awareness in various schools about the need of observing Covid-19 guidelines and being vaccinated to protect one another.

BCFs in Chimanimani have been utilizing break time to conduct focus group discussion on the guidelines on COVID-19 prevention in schools, for BCFs breaktimes are perfect to begin their hygiene awareness activities...*continue to pg5*

...continue from pg2 In respect of this AWET with support from UNICEF has been co-ordinating community dialogues and community engagement activities with caregivers/parents, community influencers to understand community perceptions, attitudes towards Childhood immunization (against Measles, Polio) social norms and barriers contributing to vaccine hesitancy.

The engagement has raised issues of concern from community members, highlights were made from caregivers indicates that in the communities people are aware of the risks of not getting their infants immunized and that children were being affected mostly with treatable illness such as diarrhoea, fever, flu, stomach worms, cough amongst others in the communities, said AWET Public Health Officer.

“Caregivers were knowledgeable that polio affects legs and can lead to paralysis while measles results in rash and high fever and is deadly. Moreover, some care givers do not have health cards for their infants owing to shortages as priority is given to those having their first child, said Palmer Dutiro (PHO).”



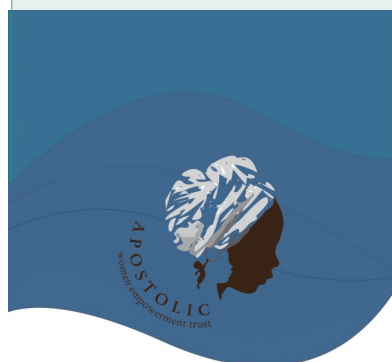
## MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY COMMEMORATIONS IN PICS





*...continue from pg3*

“During breaktime we sensitize children on the importance of following guidelines as well as give them a chance to demonstrate what they or that they would have learnt during the activities, that is always wash hands with soap under running water for at least 20 seconds, no to hand-shaking, physical distancing and not to touch their face, says Hartzel Kudyanga District Focal Person in Chimanimani.



**#GetVaccinated**  
Protect yourself  
and loved ones  
from COVID-19



## Community health and sanitation program



*DSO engaging community members in Shurugwi*

In order to improve the evidence-base on sanitation and hygiene (S&H) needs of Wards 18 and 19 population in Shurugwi district and inform response programming, Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust (AWET) carried out an assessment, with support from Anglo-American (AA) through its subsidiary company, UNKI Mine. The general objective of the assessment was to understand and analyze S&H-related needs to support evidence-based planning and effective implementation of SH program in Wards 18 and 19 of Shurugwi district. The specific objectives were as follows:

To understand the current sanitation needs in Wards 18 and 19 of Shurugwi district.

To understand the current hygiene needs in Wards 18 and 19 of Shurugwi district.

Results

From the 81 households surveyed 17% have family members with disability, and 50% of people with disability (PwD) are physically and visually disabled. More than three quarters (85%) of the households incorporated in the assessment do not have pit latrines, while 12% have unimproved pit latrine, do not ensure privacy and gender separation, and are filled up. As a result, open defecation is a widespread practice in Wards 18 and 19. Waste management is one of the major concerns in Wards 18 and 19. The survey found that two out of ten households have a household pit for disposing domestic waste, whilst 8 out ten households dispose their domestic waste at undesignated open area.

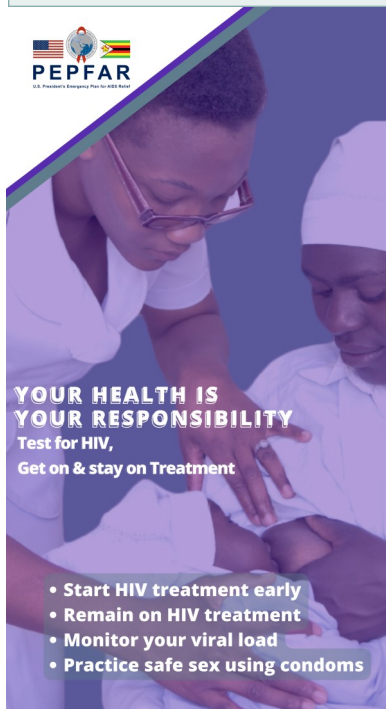
The assessment clearly revealed that Wards 18 and 19 are in dire need of sanitation...continue to pg6

## POSTOLIC WOMEN EMPOWERMENT TRUST

Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust is an Inter-Apostolic faith based, professionally managed Organisation mandated to advance the rights of Adolescents and women issues and mainstreaming of gender in Apostolic Church activities.

Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust  
22 Lanner Ave, Borrowdale Harare,  
Zimbabwe

Phone: +263 867 700 8840  
Cell: +263 772 700 987  
Tollfree: 08080443  
E-mail: info@awet.org.zw



**YOUR HEALTH IS  
YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**  
Test for HIV,  
Get on & stay on Treatment

- Start HIV treatment early
- Remain on HIV treatment
- Monitor your viral load
- Practice safe sex using condoms



[Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust](#)

[AWET Apostolic](#)

[apostolicawet](#)

[Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust awet](#)

...continue from pg5 and hygiene facilities. Many households in these 2 wards do not have improved pit latrines (BVIP), and this shows that most people are practicing open defecation. Furthermore, many households do not have handwashing facilities, and those with the facility do not use soap to wash their hands. Waste management at household level is another issue of great concern. Most households dump their waste at undesignated areas. All these obnoxious practices promote morbidity and mortality in communities, particularly among children. Therefore, there is urgent need for interventional programs that will address S&H needs in Wards 18 and 19 of Shurugwi district. (District Sanitation Officer Mr Tinashe Mwakibinga)

The following were recommendations made to improve access to sanitation and hygiene services in Wards 18 and 19.

- To construct improved disability inclusive sanitation facilities (BVIP) for the identified households in Wards 18 and 19.
- To engage communities on hygiene facilities
- To engage communities on social behavior, change toward good sanitation and hygiene practices in Ward 18 and 19.

District Sanitation Officer also sensitized communities on disability inclusion and mobilizing them to gather local available materials for the construction of Blair Ventilated Improved Pit latrines.

**#ENDPERIODPOVERTY**

**#WeAreCommitted  
to creating a world where  
everyone is educated about  
menstruation**

**#MENSTRUATIONMATTERS**