

A group of children, mostly girls in school uniforms, are holding hands in a circle on a dirt ground. They are surrounded by trees and a clear sky. The children are smiling and appear to be engaged in a group activity or game. The uniforms consist of light blue shirts and dark blue skirts or shorts. One boy in a pink shirt is also visible in the circle. The ground is dry and sandy, and the trees are green and leafy.

The Girls Council Toolkit

Acknowledgements

This Toolkit was written in August 2017, and is based on the work with adolescent girls undertaken by School Club Zambia (SCZ) in Zambia's Sinazongwe District from 2015 – 2017. SCZ is a UK and Zambian registered NGO working on grass-roots sustainable development projects in Zambia. The Girls Council project, and this Toolkit, would not have been possible without the ongoing support of Zambia's Ministry of Education, the SCZ Team and the teachers and pupils at SCZ's partner schools: Kariba South Primary School, Chisyabulungu Community School, Siansowa Primary School and Siamucaala Community School. The pictures and stories used throughout this Toolkit are all from SCZ's work with adolescent girls at these 4 rural primary schools.

Special thanks must go to those who have funded SCZ's Girls Education programme: The Herrod Foundation, Baraka Community Partnerships and the Souter Charitable Trust. Particular acknowledgement must also go to the Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust who have so generously supported the development, printing and distribution of this Toolkit to schools across the Sinazongwe District. Thank You!

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How to use this Toolkit

This Toolkit has been designed to be used by schools, organisations and youth groups operating across Zambia, and can be adapted to work in a variety of contexts. The Toolkit includes information on how to create your Girls Council, as well as a selection of topics and activities based on School Club Zambia's work with 4 schools in the Sinazongwe District. The Toolkit is designed for any individual for facilitating workshops effectively, even with limited resources. We encourage you to use this Toolkit in your own way, and adapt it as you see fit!

The introduction will talk you through how to begin organising your Girls Council group, and things to consider along the way. It will also show you through the process of developing your tailored programme for your Girls Council workshops, tips for running successful workshops and how to monitor and evaluate your impact.

The topics will give you background information and suggested activities on the various key topics identified through SCZ's work with adolescent girls. Use the images and diagrams to help the girls to understand the topics under discussion.

The resources will give you activity sheets and templates to use during your workshops. Please feel free to photocopy, share and adapt these as you wish!

Introduction to the Girls Council project

In 2016 School Club Zambia launched the pilot Girls Councils project with 4 schools in the Sinazongwe District. The project was designed as part of an on-going sustainability and child-participation approach to their work with adolescent girls. Over the 6-month pilot project, the SCZ team facilitated a total of 24 workshops with the 68 elected Girls Council members. Workshops ranged in topics and were designed in response to the specific challenges and needs for girls identified by the Girls Council members themselves. The project further developed in 2017 when a full programme was implemented throughout the school year with all 4 schools.

The primary objectives of the Girls Council programme are:

- To educate and inform pupils and community members on the challenges faced by adolescent girls;
- To create a group of motivated and passionate advocates who commit to helping and support adolescent girls in their communities

CASE STUDY: Precious, pupil and member of the Girls Council at Kariba South Primary School

Precious is 12 years old, in Grade 6 and has been a fantastic member of the Girls Council at Kariba South. Here are some of her thoughts on the Girls Council....

“I wanted to join the Girls Council because I had the desire to learn. Through the workshops I have learnt about the disadvantages of early marriage, the power of a teenage girl and that if you are educated you are likely to educate your own children because you understand the importance of having an education. I love the Girls Council because I learnt more than I thought I would, and I would like my fellow youths to have this same knowledge. This is even more important in rural areas such as ours. I always make sure to tell my friends about the topics we learn from the Girls Council – many of them also now want to join!”

Child Participation

“States Parties shall assure the child who is capable of forming his or her own views has the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child...”

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12

The Girls Councils have proven to be a successful approach to ensuring child participation in School Club Zambia’s work with girls. The team took great care not to develop a prescribed programme prior to the launch of the pilot, allowing for each Council group to determine the direction of their workshops. The Girls Council members are now a vital part of the SCZ network, ensuring that all SCZ’s work is truly responding to the needs of its beneficiaries.

“Asking the girls what they want to discuss was the first thing we did with the Girls Councils. I think this is important because girls are not often asked their opinion – especially when they are so young. Although some of them are very shy, most became more and more confident as the project went on, which was great to see!”

– Alice, SCZ Youth & Gender Officer

Setting up your Girls Council

The key to a strong and successful Girls Council is its members: they must be passionate about supporting girls and have a willingness to learn. It is important to include both the girls themselves, as well as adults from the community. We recommend limiting the size of the Girls Council to approximately 20 members, with a 75% pupil representation. We also advise that any girls involved should be over the age of 13, due to the sensitive nature of the workshop content.

Choosing your Girls Council Members

- Hold an open meeting where any interested girls and adults can attend to learn more about the programme and decide if they are interested in joining;
- Invite individuals to nominate themselves as a member of the Girls Council, and undertake an election (if necessary) to identify the 20 Girls Council members;
- *Remember: make sure that each member is able to commit time and energy to the programme!*

Choose your location

- Decide with the group where and when workshops will take place. Make sure to choose a place where everyone feels comfortable.

Consent

For any members under the age of 18, consent must be given by their parent or guardian to confirm they are able to participate in the programme.

**The qualities of a good
Girls Council member**

***by Siansowa Primary
School Girls Council***

- ***Be truthful***
- ***Be committed***
- ***Be informed***
- ***Be confident***
- ***Be active***
- ***Lead by example***



Developing your Girls Council Programme Plan

The first workshop should be dedicated to exploring the biggest challenges faced by girls in your community, and how your Girls Council programme can address these. Techniques to assess challenges could include:

- **Focus groups with adolescent girls:** your Girls Council group is the perfect focus group! Take time at the beginning of the programme to discuss with them the most significant challenges they face as teenage girls.
- **Home visits and interviews with adolescent girls:** the Girls Council group can also be set the task of undertaking home visits and interviews with other girls not involved in the Girls Council programme. This is a good strategy to involve girls who have dropped out of school, or who do not have access to programmes such as the Girls Council.
- **Challenge ranking activity (see below):** once a range of challenges have been identified, use this activity to order them by priority, to help choose the topics you wish to explore in future workshops.

ACTIVITY: Challenge Ranking

Firstly, write all the challenges you and the group have identified on separate pieces of paper. Next, choose two challenges and ask the group – *which if these is a bigger problem in your community?* Continue comparing challenges until you have a list, where the biggest challenges are at the top. Challenges may be on an equal level if the group think this is appropriate.

Here is an example of a Challenge Ranking from the SCZ pilot project. Yours may look very different!

Biggest
challenges

Lack of parental
commitment/faith in the
education of their
children

Early marriage resulting
in girls dropping out of
school immediately after
marriage

Lack of school fees to
support children's
education

Lack of sex education in
school – abstinence is
taught but teenage
pregnancies still persist

Lack of positive role
models for girls – limited
access to media and few
female professionals

Lower priority
challenges

Tips for running a successful workshop

- **Be prepared!** Always know which topic the workshop will address, which activities you will be doing and what the aim for the workshop is.
- Consider your **language** requirements for facilitating the workshop – consider which language the group will be most comfortably communicating with.
- Keep an up-to-date **register** for your Girls Council group, and mark attendance at each workshop. If someone has poor attendance, consider offering their space to someone who will be more active.
- Always start each workshop with a **warm-up game** (see examples below). This makes sure the group are relaxed and energetic for the workshop. Sometimes it might be necessary to have an additional energiser game half way through the workshop to keep energy and attention levels up.
- Try not to speak for more than 5-10 minutes at a time. The workshops should be a discussion as much as possible – not just another school lesson. **Active participation** from all the Girls Council members is very important and must be encouraged at all times.
- Consider giving each member an **exercise book** for the Girls Council workshops, if your resources permit. Having a place where they can refer back to past information can be very useful, particularly in the later advocacy stages of the project.

Warm-up Games & Energisers

Musical Statues: the group must dance to music – the more dancing the better! – and when the music stops, they must stay as still as a statue. Anyone caught moving after the music is turned off must sit down!

Trust Fall: split the group into pairs. One of the pair should stand with her feet firmly on the floor with her arms crossed. The partner should be close behind her with her hands up at shoulder level. When both girls shout 'ready!', the first girl falls back slowly without looking back or moving her feet, and her partner should catch her.

Go Down!: All the group stand up and start slowly crouching to the floor singing "Go down, down enjoy the beat, go down down, enjoy the beat!" when they have almost reached the floor, they sing "stay there! Enjoy the beat!" and everyone tries not to fall over! Repeat the same going back up.

TIP: Ask your group if they have any games they wish to share. There are always new games to learn from the playground!

Monitoring and Evaluating your Girls Council Programme

Monitoring and evaluation is an important part of any project. It will show you if you are achieving your aims, and can identify which areas of the project need improvement in the future. There are 2 key elements to effective monitoring and evaluation:

- *A realistic target to aim for*
- *A baseline from which to measure your progress towards this target*

Defining your target(s)

This will depend on the aim you have for your Girls Council members. You can work with your group to identify what targets you wish to aim for over the course of the project. These targets may be for your group only (e.g increased knowledge in sexual health, or increased confidence) or it may be targets for the impact you wish your Girls Council to have on their community (Perhaps it is to bring a minimum of 5 drop-outs back to school? Or to educate over 100 other teenage girls about the dangers of early marriage?). It could even include both! Either way, you are likely to want more than 1 target for your project, but be careful not to have too many and make sure you keep them realistic and achievable!

Undertaking your baseline survey

Depending on the targets you have chosen, you may need to gather some baseline information. A baseline shows the current situation, before any project has begun. For example, you may need to find out how many girls dropped out of your school last year, or how many girls are out of school in your community and the reasons why. You may need to assess the knowledge level on a particular topic with a simple test or survey questions.

Measuring your progress

You will also need to identify which methods you will use to measure progress towards your targets – will you need to conduct interviews or surveys for example? When will you need to gather this information? Putting a plan in place before you start your project is very important to make sure you can evaluate your success throughout your project.

Evaluating your success

Once the project is finished and you have gathered all the monitoring data, you can sit with your group and evaluate the impact your work has had during a Review Workshop. Compare your evaluation data to your baseline information to see what change you have made on your chosen targets, and discuss with your group why they think some things may have been more successful than others. This is also a good opportunity to gather the thoughts from your group on the successes and challenges of the project, and any changes they would like to see in the future.

Sharing your learning

It is always important to share what you and your group have learnt from the project! There may be people in the local area who are interested to know the impact the project has had; local stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, the health clinic, schools, churches, NGOs, business, pupils, teachers and even the families of the Girls Council members. Perhaps consider writing a letter outlining the project and its impact. You never know who might be interested in organising their own Girls Council, and they will need your help and Toolkit to do it!

Topic 1: The Importance of Girls Education

Why is Girls Education so important?

Education is important for both boys and girls. However, in some countries girls face more challenges than boys in completing their education. Girls hold a special power when it comes to the future...here are just a few of the reasons why:

- **Educating future generations:** As the proverb goes, “*If you educate a girl, you educate a nation*”. After completing school, girls are far more likely to make sure their children also receive an education.
- **Less infant mortality:** Children of girls who completed school are much more likely to survive their childhood. Girls who receive an education are less likely to contract HIV & AIDS, and therefore less likely to pass it onto their children. Some reports state that when a child is born to a woman in Africa who hasn't received an education, he or she has a 20% chance of dying before the age of 5 years old.
- **Less maternal mortality:** Educated women are less likely to die during pregnancy, childbirth as they are likely to be more informed about health care and risks as well as more likely to wait until their body is ready to bear children.
- **Less child marriage:** Early marriage often results in the girl dropping out of her education. The result is less educated, young mothers without the necessary tools to build healthy, educated families.
- **Less domestic & sexual violence:** Educated girls and women are less likely to be victims of domestic and sexual violence or to tolerate it in their families.
- **Improved socio-economic growth:** Educated women have a greater chance of earning a higher income, leading to healthier and more educated children and a higher standard of living for their children, families and communities.

ACTIVITY: A Day in the Life of a Girl

Ask the group to describe a typical day in the life of a teenage girl who is in school – you can use the Activity Sheet at the end of this Toolkit to help. Give her a name, a family and hobbies, then run through what she does from when she wakes up in the morning, until she goes to bed. Ask the group to be as detailed as possible. Now do the same activity but for a different teenage girl who is not attending school. Once these are both complete, ask the group questions, exploring the reasons why education is so important....

- *What differences are there between the girls?*
- *What impact will dropping out of school have on Girl #2?*
- *How will education be useful for Girl #1?*
- *What does the future look like for both of these girls?*

Topic 2: The 'Girl Effect'

What is the 'Girl Effect'?

In 2008, the Nike Foundation, the NoVo Foundation, United Nations Foundation and Coalition for Adolescent Girls created the Girl Effect to 'leverage the unique potential of adolescent girls to end poverty for themselves, their families, their communities, their countries and the world'. The Girl Effect began as a video, and has since spread across the world! In 2016 SCZ used the ideas behind the original Girl Effect video and resources, and adapted these ideas for the Girls Council programme.

How can we use the 'Girl Effect' in the Girls Council?

The Girl Effect highlights the power that each teenage girl has in changing her life, the life of her family and community members and, ultimately, the world. SCZ took the core principles behind this, and developed the Girl Effect Cycle (see next page). This Cycle shows the ripple effect for a teenage girl if she is *happy, healthy and educated*.

Why is the Girl Effect so useful?

The Girl Effect is a really useful tool to show in clear terms the power that each teenage girl has. For the Girls Council members, this means them! A lot of the information in the Cycle will not be new to the girls, but it will put these ideas and facts into a context that will make it very easy to see how powerful they really are. The Girl Effect Cycle is also a useful resource when discussing the importance of girls education with their family and community members, as it creates a central theme to the Girls Council project.

Source: GirlEffect.org.



When a teenage girl is

**happy,
healthy,
& educated**
she is....

...and the cycle
continues
generation upon
generation!

...more likely to
marry and have
children later in
her life...

...as well as
more likely to
complete their
education..

...which will reduce
her risk of
contracting
HIV/AIDS and STIs..

THE GIRL EFFECT

The power of a teenage girl

...if she does have
children, they are
significantly more
likely to survive
infancy...

...as well as reduce
the risk of
complications during
pregnancy and
childbirth...

...and use this income
to invest in the
education, health and
happiness of her
family...

...she is also more likely
to be employed or self-
employed and earn a
higher income...

ACTIVITY: The Girl Effect Cycle

Write each stage of the Girl Effect Cycle on a separate piece of paper (or photocopy the cards from the resources section at the end of this Toolkit). Shuffle the cards and ask the group to read out each card (they should not be in order). Now ask the group to work together to put the Girl Effect Cycle back in the right order. This activity will encourage each member to think about the ripple effect of a happy, healthy and educated teenage girl.



Topic 3: Puberty, Menstruation and the Female Reproductive System

What is puberty?

Puberty is when a child's body begins to develop and change as they become an adult. It is completely normal for puberty to begin for girls and boys at any point from the ages of 8 to 14.

Girls develop breasts and hips, and they will start their period (menstruation). Boys develop a deeper voice and start to look like men. Both boys and girls will begin to develop public hair and underarm hair, and may get acne or body odor. Boys and girls can also experience moodswings.

What is menstruation?

Menstruation is part of puberty for girls, and is a sign that her body is preparing so that she can have a baby one day. The Menstrual Cycle (see diagram & explanation) lasts for approximately 28 days, during which girls will have a period from 2 – 7 days. The period is blood which leaves the body through the vagina. For most girls, the amount of blood is around 2 tablespoons, although it can often feel like more! The blood leaves the body because it's no longer needed. It comes from the uterus, the organ inside a woman's body where a baby grows. Each month, blood builds up in the uterus in case the woman becomes pregnant. That lining would be needed if the woman's egg was fertilized by a man's sperm cell. A fertilized egg attaches to that cushiony lining and begins growing into a baby. But most of the time, the egg does not get fertilized, the lining is shed, and the girl or woman has her period.

Girls carry eggs?

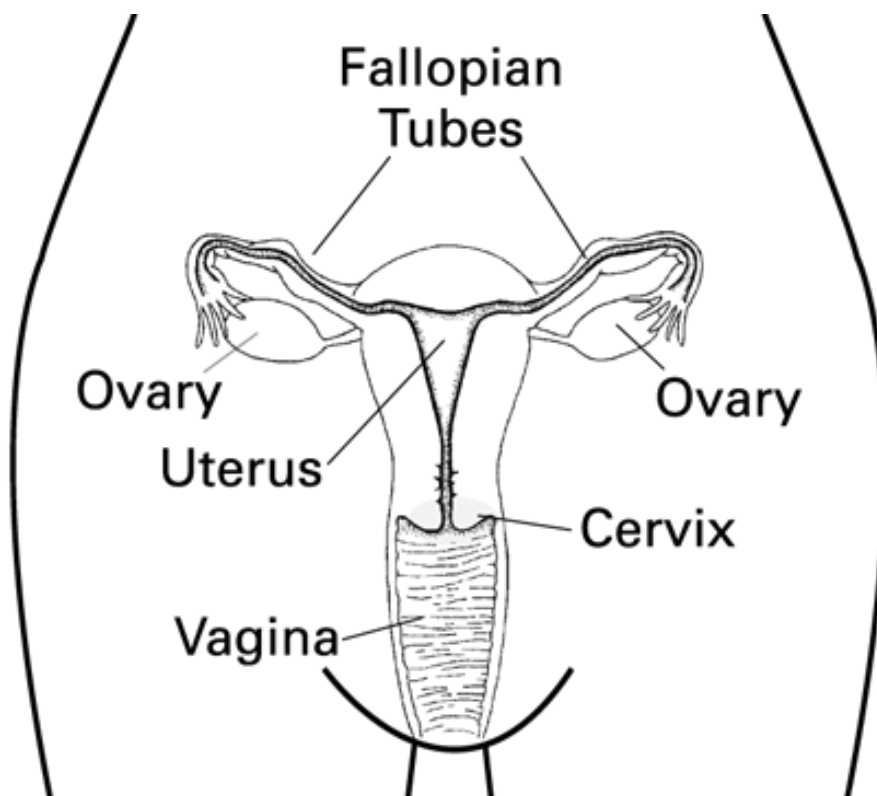
Yes, but they are not the kind you get from chickens! Girls and women have two ovaries. Each of these ovaries holds thousands of eggs, which are tiny (each no bigger than the tip of a pin). During the menstrual cycle, an egg is released from one of the ovaries and begins a trip down one of the fallopian tubes to the uterus. If a sperm cell does not fertilize the egg, the unfertilized egg and the lining from the uterus leave the body. In other words, a girl has her period. The cycle then begins again. The lining of the uterus will start building up, and about 2 weeks after the last period, another egg will be released.

ACTIVITY: What, Why, How?

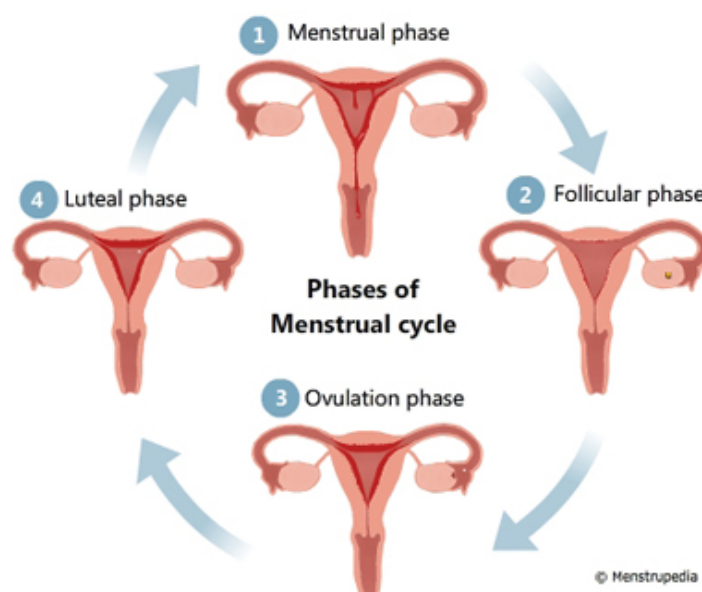
It is normal for girls to have a range of knowledge on this topic. Some may have learnt from school, from their family members or friends. Often, teenage girls know about some of the facts, but not all of them. Take care to talk them through the information in detail, and stop for any questions they have. A good way to assess their knowledge is to ask a series of questions *before* you begin the workshop. Ask them the same questions at the end of the workshop, and see how different the answers are!

- What is puberty?
- What happens to boys and girls during puberty?
- What is a period / menstruation?
- Why do girls get periods?
- Why do boys not get periods?
- How do girls get pregnant?

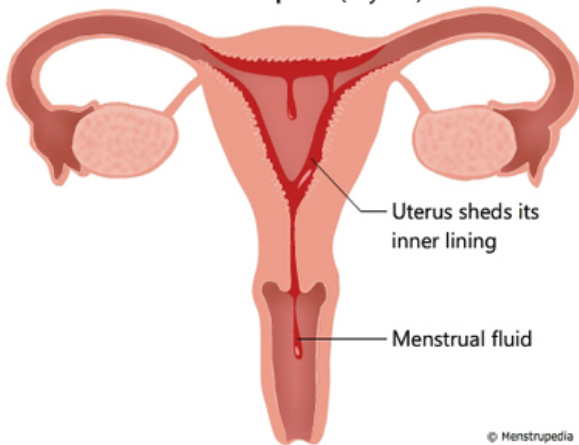
The Female Reproductive System:



The Menstrual Cycle:



Menstrual phase (day 1-5)

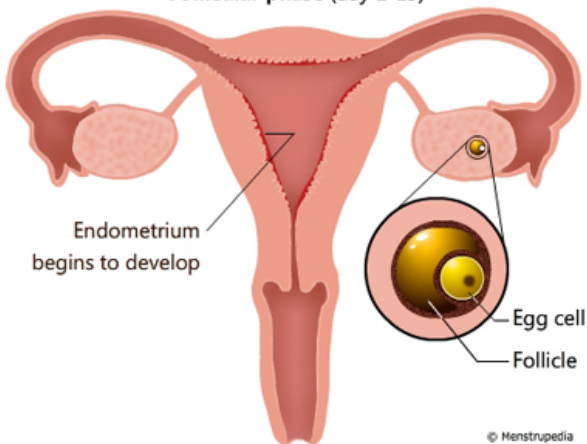


Menstrual phase (day 1-5)

Menstrual phase begins on the first day of menstruation and lasts till the 5th day of the menstrual cycle. This is when the uterus sheds its inner lining of soft tissue and blood vessels which exits the body from the vagina in the form of menstrual fluid.

You may experience abdominal cramps. These cramps are caused by the contraction of the uterine and the abdominal muscles to expel the menstrual fluid.

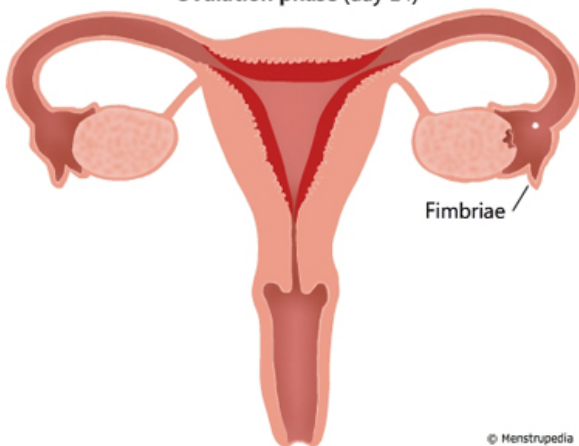
Follicular phase (day 1-13)



Follicular phase (day 1-13)

This phase also begins on the first day of menstruation, but it lasts till the 13th day of the menstrual cycle. The pituitary gland secretes a hormone that stimulates the egg cells in the ovaries to grow. One of these egg cells begins to mature in a sac-like-structure called follicle. It takes 13 days for the egg cell to reach maturity. While the egg cell matures, the uterus develops a lining of blood vessels and soft tissue called endometrium.

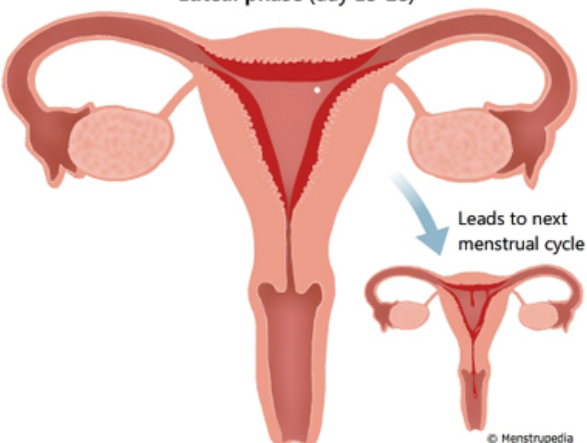
Ovulation phase (day 14)



Ovulation phase (day 14)

On the 14th day of the cycle, the pituitary gland secretes a hormone that causes the ovary to release the matured egg cell. The released egg cell is swept into the fallopian tube by the cilia of the fimbriae. Fimbriae are finger like projections located at the end of the fallopian tube close to the ovaries and cilia are slender hair like projections on each Fimbria.

Luteal phase (day 15-28)



Luteal phase (day 15-28)

This phase begins on the 15th day and lasts till the end of the cycle. The egg cell released during the ovulation phase stays in the fallopian tube for 24 hours. If a sperm cell does not impregnate the egg cell within that time, the egg cell disintegrates.

The hormone that causes the uterus to retain its endometrium gets used up by the end of the menstrual cycle. This causes the menstrual phase of the next cycle to begin.

ACTIVITY: Truth or Myth?

Read out the following statements and ask the group to decide if they are the Truth or a Myth. Ask them why they have chosen their answer and then reveal if they are correct! This list is to give examples, add new ones or even ask the group to contribute.

This activity is good to get the discussion going around what is fact and what is myth when talking about puberty and menstruation. It should also be a comfortable opportunity for the girls to ask more questions.

It is important to note that many countries and societies have different myths (superstitions or rituals). This does not mean they are wrong, but it is important for the girls to know that they are not necessarily based on facts and that menstruating is NOT something that is shameful or unclean – it is simply a sign that you are becoming a woman!

→ **You must not cook when you are menstruating**

This belief is seen across the world, in many African countries as well as in India, Japan and other parts of Asia. It is a myth that comes from thinking that girls and women are 'unclean' when they are menstruating.

→ **You must not go to school when you are menstruating**

This is certainly a myth! There is no reason for girls not to come to school while they are menstruating.

→ **You cannot have cold drinks when you are menstruating**

In South America some people believe that if you have a cold drink whilst menstruating, you will get cramps. This is a myth!

→ **You must not dance when you are menstruating**

This myth is believed by some people in Mexico.

→ **Periods can last from 3 – 7 days each month**

This is the truth! Some girls will have shorter or longer periods than others. It is normal for girls to have very different experiences than their friends.

→ **Everyone can tell when you are menstruating**

This is a myth! There is no reason that anyone will be able to tell if you are having a period, unless you tell them!

→ **Girls can start menstruating at any age from 7 to 18 years old**

This is the truth! 7 years old may sound very young, but in some rare cases girls this young have started their first periods. The average is around 14 years old, but do not be concerned if you are starting a little later than your friends – everyone's body is different!

→ **Once a girl has started her period, she is ready for marriage**

This is a dangerous myth. Menstruation does NOT necessarily mean a girl is ready for marriage or pregnancy.

→ **Girls can only become pregnant once they start their period**

This is the truth! The menstrual cycle is an important part of female reproduction.

→ **Your menstrual cycle can sometimes cause you to have mood swings**

This is the truth! Your mood may fluctuate during your cycle, this is normal and is because of the change in hormones through the different stages.

Topic 4: Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM)

When a girl begins to menstruate, she will need to take a few steps to deal with her menstrual flow and to maintain general hygiene. Here are some general measures that can help girls to continue their daily routine without being interrupted by having a period, together this is known as Menstrual Hygiene Management:

1. **Flow Management:** there are a variety of methods to prevent the menstrual blood from soiling clothes. Sanitary pads are the most common and are usually widely available.
2. **General Hygiene:** maintaining cleanliness is very important at all times, and especially when menstruating.
3. **Balanced Diet:** eating a balanced diet is very important to ensure your body is provided with all the nutrients it needs to grow and develop.
4. **Active Lifestyle:** being active is important for your body to stay healthy, and also to avoid stress and tension.



What about menstrual cramps?

Menstrual cramps are just you feeling your uterus contract to shed its lining, and it can sometimes be painful. This is completely normal and different for every girl. Most girls will suffer from cramps and pains during their periods, but not everyone will and some may be much worse than others. Here are a few methods to help relieve menstrual cramp:

- Increase the amount of fruit & vegetables you eat in the days leading up to your period – especially bananas and spinach!
- Avoid sugar and caffeine
- Basic painkillers can help relieve the pain
- Stretching can also help your muscles to relax: in the photo below, pupils practice some basic stretches to help relieve cramps



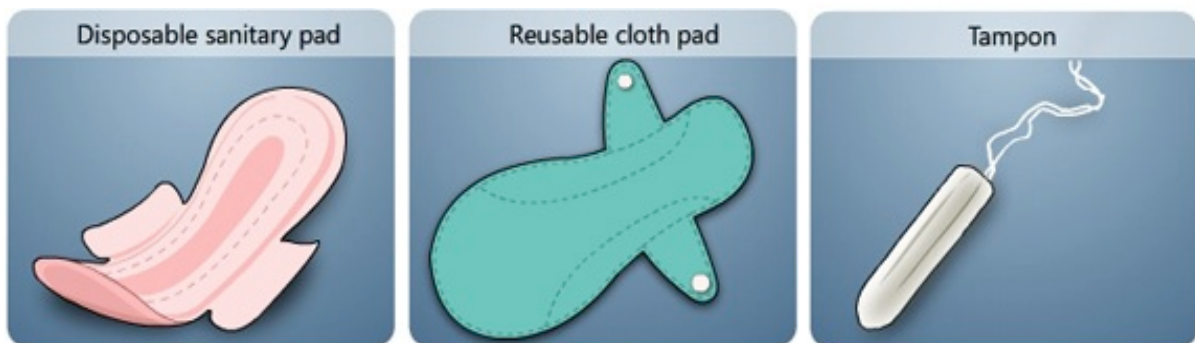
ACTIVITY: Sharing Circle

Sit the group in a circle, and encourage them to tell stories about puberty and menstruation from their own experiences, or stories they have heard from other people. These stories may be funny, or embarrassing, and the important thing is for everyone to share, discuss and ask questions. Understanding that everyone has the same concerns or worries as you, is an important part of understanding puberty, and some stories may be helpful for other girls in the future. Make sure the adults also participate here, as they will have the most experience to share!

Focus on: Flow Management

During menstruation, the menstrual fluid (or menstrual blood) needs to be absorbed and disposed of in a safe and hygienic way. There are a number of different options for this:

- **Disposable sanitary pad:** this is absorbent pad worn inside the underwear. They are only used once, then must be disposed of. These pads are often the most available method, particularly in rural areas, however, it can also be an expensive option.
- **Reusable sanitary pad:** this is a pad made of washable cloth that can be reused once washed and dried. These can be easily made by hand, and are usually the cheapest option.
- **Tampon:** this is a small tube of very absorbent material that is inserted into the vagina to absorb fluid. Tampons are often not as widely available, and some girls prefer not to use them. They can also be quite expensive.



ACTIVITY: Pros & Cons

Discuss with your group about the flow management options available to them and show them the different options if possible. Not all the girls may have started menstruating, so they may not be very informed. It is important for these girls to understand what will happen to their body and what they need to know to prepare. Explain to the group all the different flow management methods and discuss with the group if they are available locally, and the 'pros' and 'cons' for each method.

Topic 5: Early Marriage and Early Pregnancy

What is Early Marriage?

Early marriage is defined as a formal marriage or an informal union when one or both of the spouses are below the age of 18.

Early Marriage in Zambia

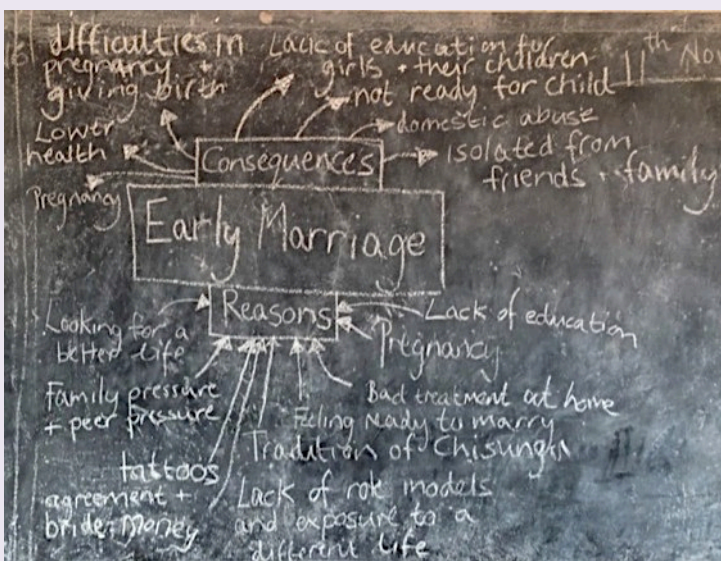
- The minimum age of marriage under statutory law is 21 years for girls and boys, however they can marry at 16 years old with parental consent. In customary law girls are allowed to marry when they have reached puberty.
- Zambia has one of the highest Early Marriage rates in the world, with 31% of women aged 20-24 years married by the age of 18, and 6% married by the age of 15. This may even be higher due to the low number of official birth and marriage registrations. (UNICEF)
- Early marriage prevalence varies widely depending on the region, with the highest prevalence in rural areas.

ACTIVITY: Reasons & Consequences

It is important to understand the difference between the reasons and consequences for why Early Marriage occurs so frequently. The reasons are *why* the problem occurs, and the *consequences* are the result of the action. Firstly, ask your group about the reasons why Early Marriage happens in your community, then move on to the consequences. This will give you and your group a very good understanding of the problem in your community, and will hopefully lead to ideas about how to improve the situation!

CASE STUDY:

Reasons & Consequences of Early Marriage at Siamucaala Community School



During the School Club Zambia pilot project, it became clear that many of the reasons for Early Marriage were similar in all 4 communities. However, there were some notable differences. For example, in communities close to Lake Kariba it became clear that girls had different challenges when compared to those living further from the lake. Similarly, the most rural communities suffered more from problems of arranged marriages, and lack of role models. These examples show how important to always understand your context!

Here are some facts that may help your group understand the consequences of both Early Marriage and Early Pregnancy....

What are the consequences of Early Marriage?

- **Gender Inequality:** Younger girls are particularly vulnerable to being married to men who are significantly older or men who have multiple wives.
- **Domestic Violence:** Early marriage robs a girl of her rights, freedoms and choices. Child brides are much more likely to be the victims of physical and sexual abuse.
- **Poverty:** Girls who marry young are more likely to be poor and remain poor.
- **Lack of Education:** Child brides are almost always forced to drop out of school and are much less likely to finish their education. For every year a girl is married before adulthood, her literacy reduces by 6%. Daughters of young mothers are also more likely to drop out of school and be married young.

What are the consequences of Early Pregnancy?

- **Maternal Mortality:** Early Marriage increases the likelihood that a girl will give birth at a young age, when their bodies are not ready to have children. Complications related to childbirth and pregnancy are the leading cause of death for girls ages 15 to 19.
- **Infant Mortality:** Adolescent mothers are more likely to give birth prematurely or have stillborn babies. Infant death rates of mothers under 20 years old are 50% higher than those over 20 years old.
- **Health Problems:** Girls who have babies too early have a high risk of suffering from obstetric fistula - a condition that causes incontinence. Girls who marry young face a higher rate of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections because of their biological vulnerability and social inequality.



Topic 6: HIV, AIDS & STIs

What is HIV?

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. As the name indicates, it is a virus that makes the immune system weak. We need our immune system to defend our bodies against diseases and illness. People with aids, and a weak immune system, are at risk of contracting a range of infections and diseases – this person will eventually become weaker and develops AIDS.

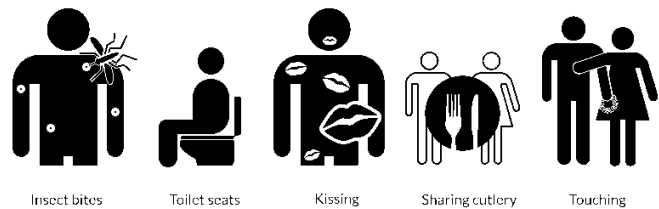
What is AIDS?

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. AIDS is passed between people by exposure to an infected persons blood, sexual fluid or breast milk. AIDS is what happens when HIV has destroyed a person's immune system. There is no known cure for AIDS and eventually it will kill the patient. It is possible to control the symptoms with medication, but they are expensive and often difficult to find and they do not provide a cure.

How can you catch HIV?

HIV is different from other diseases and illnesses because it is not passed through the air, from just touching a person or drinking from someone else's cup. HIV is contracted through exposure to an infected persons fluid through sexual intercourse, blood transfusions, pregnancy, child-bird, breast-feeding, sharing knives, needles or syringes.

HIV IS NOT TRANSMITTED BY...



How can we avoid catching HIV?

There are many ways of preventing exposure to HIV/AIDS: abstaining from sexual intercourse, the use of condoms and always avoiding any unclean medical equipment and not sharing other equipment such as razors, syringes and knives.

What is an STI?

STI stands for Sexually Transmitted Infection (sometimes also known as an STD – Sexually Transmitted Disease). An STI is an infection that is passed between people through sexual intercourse. There are often no symptoms on an STI, so check-ups are very important once you are sexually active.

It is very important to know that having an STI can increase your risk of contracting or transmitting HIV. Quick and proper treatment of STIs is very important in HIV prevention.

How can we avoid catching STIs?

STIs can be avoided only through abstinence and the use of condoms. Other contraceptive methods (eg the pill or injection) are NOT effective against STIs.

TIP: Speak to your local clinic nurses and doctors. They may have some information that can be passed to your Girls Council group, particularly in reference to what services are available at the clinic. They may even volunteer to come and speak to the group themselves! There also may be NGOs working on HIV prevention projects – the clinic should also know about anything like this.

ACTIVITY: True or False?

Ask your group if these statements are true or false. Why do they think so? Explain the answers to them.

- **You can't get HIV if you only have sex once**
This is false. All it takes is one time if you have not taken the appropriate precautions.
- **You can get HIV from kissing someone**
This is false. HIV cannot be passed on through saliva
- **You can tell if someone has HIV just by looking at them**
This is false. There are often no visible symptoms, which make it very easy to hide
- **Once you have HIV you can feel it in your body**
This is false. You may not know you have contracted HIV until you are tested
- **Contraceptive pills help protect the body from contracting HIV during sexual intercourse**
This is false. The pills do nothing to guard against HIV or STI contraction; they just work against pregnancy only.
- **Having sexual intercourse with a virgin can cure HIV OR the only way to get rid of HIV is to give it to somebody else**
This is false. There is NO cure for HIV or AIDS yet. Having unprotected sexual intercourse with another person will never cure them; it will just put the other person at risk.

ACTIVITY: Risky or Non-Risky?

Ask your group if these activities are *RISKY* or *NON-RISKY* behaviours when it comes to contracting HIV or STIs. Remember; ask them to be specific about what is risky with each answer!

- **Kissing:** no risk of contracting anything
- **Mosquito bite:** no risk of contracting anything, except malaria!
- **Sharing needles for ear piercing or tattoos:** high risk of contracting HIV or an STI
- **Abstaining from sexual intercourse:** no risk of contracting anything
- **Going to school with an HIV-infected person:** no risk of contracting anything
- **Eating food prepared by an HIV-positive person:** no risk of contracting anything
- **Sexual intercourse without use of a condom:** high risk of contracting HIV or an STI
- **Sexual intercourse with use of a condom:** low risk of contracting HIV or an STI
- **Sharing clothes with an HIV-infected person:** no risk of contracting anything
- **Cutting you skin with a knife used by others:** high risk of contracting HIV or an STI
- **Sharing a bed with someone who has an STI:** no risk of contracting anything as long as there is no sexual intercourse
- **Using a condom more than once:** high risk of contracting HIV or an STI

Topic 7: Advocacy

Advocacy: “the act of supporting a cause”

An Advocate: “a person who publicly supports a specific cause”

A Cause: “a principle, aim or ideal to which a person is committed”

One of the major objectives of the Girls Council project is to create groups of advocates for girls education and girls rights. Now that your group has gathered so much information on why girls education is important and some of the major barriers faced by girls, they are in the perfect position to become active advocates in their communities for their chosen cause of girls education.

Begin this workshop with the definitions above: advocacy, an advocate and a cause. Make sure all members of your group understand each term. Then ask them the following questions:

→ ***What is our cause?***

The answer here should be something like ‘Girls Education’, or more specifically, ‘to make sure all girls stay in school’. It is up to the group how they want to define their cause – there is no wrong answer!

→ ***How can we be successful advocates our cause?***

One of the best answers to this question is: *make use of locally available people and resources*. This means thinking about what things or people that are already around us can help the advocates to support their cause. Examples of this might include: local clinic programmes; extra curricular school activities; church groups; local NGO programmes; community leaders; and church leaders.

→ ***What can we do to be successful advocates for our cause?***

It is now time for the group to start thinking about what activities they can organise to share their learning and experiences with their communities. To be a successful advocate they need to educate and inform as many people as they can about the importance of girls education with the aim of having a positive influence on girls in their communities.



ACTIVITY: Planning Advocacy Activities

One of the best ways to share information within the community, and to be successful advocates, is to plan activities that will reach many people. This was a focus for School Club Zambia in 2017, and the Girls Councils came up with a variety of ideas from writing and performing plays, poems and songs, to making informative posters, going door-to-door and speaking at school assemblies and having regular community meetings.

Every community is different, and each one will have different activities that are appropriate. Work with your group to brainstorm ideas and choose 1 or 2 to organise each term.

How to plan your activities:

- Brainstorm potential activities and identify the best one for your needs
- Use the '**Stakeholder Mapping**' activity sheet to find out who can help you and how (find this at the end of this Toolkit)
- Write a list of resources that will be needed (and make a budget for these if necessary)
- Use the '**Action Planner**' activity sheet to organise and track of all the things that need to be done to make the activity a success! (find this at the end of this Toolkit)

International Events to consider:

- **International Day of the Girl: 11th October**
Every year groups and organisations across the world celebrate the International Day of the Girl. This is a very good opportunity to organise a large activity that will involve your whole community. Why not organise a singing competition? Or a presentation by the Girls Council members about the importance of girls education?
- **Menstrual Hygiene Day: 28th May**
Every year organisations across the world celebrate and promote Menstrual Hygiene Day in order to raise awareness of the challenges faced by girls and women across the world and to break taboos in the discussion of Menstrual Hygiene Management.
- **International Women's Day: 8th March**
Every year people across the world celebrate International Women's Day, which focuses on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **World AIDS Day: 1st December**
World AIDS Day brings people together from all over the world to raise awareness on HIV prevention, the importance of testing and organisations working to eradicate the AIDS epidemic.

Activity Sheet 1:
A Day in the Life of a Girl

GIRL #1

A girl who is in school

Name:
Age:
Grade:
Family:
Hobbies:

Morning



Evening

GIRL #2

A girl who is not in school

Name:
Age:
Reason for dropping out:
Family:
Hobbies:

Morning



Evening

What differences are there between the girls?

What impact will dropping out of school have on Girl #2?

How will education be useful for Girl #1?

What does the future look like for both of these girls?

**Activity Sheet 2:
The Girl Effect Cycle**

When a teenage girl is ***happy, healthy & educated*** she is....

...more likely to marry and have children later in her life...

...which will reduce her risk of contracting HIV/AIDs and STIs...

...as well as the reduce the risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth...

...she is also more likely to be employed or self-employed, and earn a higher income...

...and use this income to invest in the education and health of her family...

...if she does have children, they are significantly more likely to survive infancy...

...as well as more likely to complete their education...

...and the cycle continues generation upon generation!

**Activity Sheet 3:
Stakeholder Mapping**

“Stakeholder”: a person, or group of people, with a concern or interest in something”

STAKEHOLDER NAME	CURRENT SUPPORT LEVEL	WHAT DO WE WANT FROM THEM?	WHAT ARE THEIR INTERESTS	HOW CAN WE ENGAGE THEM?	PRIORITY LEVEL [low, medium, high]

**Activity Sheet 4:
Activity Action Planner**

ACTION	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS ACTION?	WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR THIS ACTION?	ACTION COMPLETE?	NOTES

Example Girls Council Programme

The following table shows an example of a 12-month Girls Council Programme plan. This can be adapted to suit your requirements, and your Girls Council plans may be very different. It is important to consider things like school holidays and exam periods when planning your programme, as these can affect the attendance for any extra-curricular activities. You may wish to repeat the programme with different Girls Council members each year, or continue the programme for longer than 12 months. It is all up to you!

January	Workshop 1	The importance of Girls Education
February	Workshop 2	The Girl Effect
March	Workshop 3 & Advocacy Activity 1	Puberty, Menstruation & Female Reproductive System
April	<i>No workshop – school holidays</i>	
May	Workshop 4	Menstrual Hygiene Management
June	Workshop 5	Early Marriage & Early Pregnancy
July	Workshop 6 & Advocacy Activity 2	HIV, AIDS & STIS
August	<i>No workshop – school holidays</i>	
September	Workshop 7	Advocacy
October	Workshop 8 & Advocacy Activity 3	Celebration for International Day of the Girl
November	<i>No workshop – exams</i>	
December	<i>No workshop – school holidays</i>	

References & Resources

Please note: you will need Internet access to use these resources

www.menstrupedia.com

Menstrupedia is an educational website developed in India. It has very useful information and diagrams about all aspects of menstruation and puberty.

www.girleffect.org

The Girl Effect website holds many resources that are available to download.

www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/zambia

Girls Not Brides is an international movement aiming to end child marriage in all countries worldwide. Their website has a lot of information on early marriage and early pregnancy, as well as a factsheet about Zambia and stories from Zambia (see link above).

www.schoolclubzambia.org/girls-education

School Club Zambia's Girls Education Programme is the basis for much of this Toolkit. The website has more information on the programme, as well as reports that can be downloaded.

www.popcouncil.org/research/adolescent-girls-empowerment-program

The Population Council is a research organisation working across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East who focus on HIV/AIDS programmes and girls empowerment. Their Adolescent Girls Empowerment Program (AGEP) is a project specifically designed for Zambia. The '*Health and Life Skills Curriculum*' was designed for this project and is a very thorough document, which includes: tips for facilitating girls projects, workshop plans, activities, games and discussions.

