

# STRATEGIES TO ADVOCATE MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE AMONG STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN EASTERN INDONESIA



Silvia Devina<sup>1</sup>, Novika Noerdiyanti<sup>1</sup>, Neky Nitbani<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Yayasan Plan International Indonesia (Plan Indonesia)

## PRESENTING AUTHORS

**Novika Noerdiyanti**

Email: novika.noerdiyanti@plan-international.org

**Neky Nitbani**

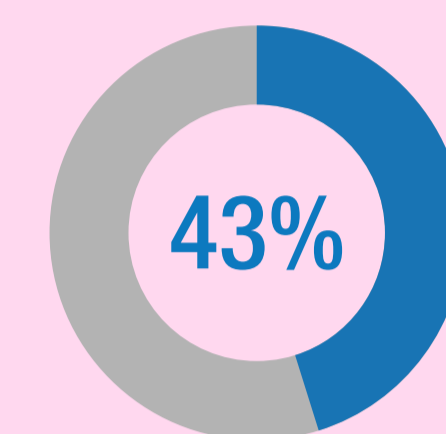
Email: neky.nitbani@plan-international.org

## BRIEF SUMMARY

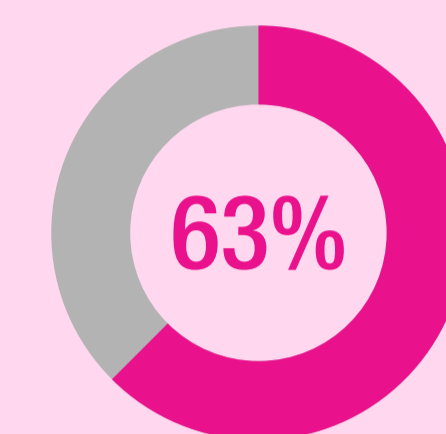
Plan Indonesia work in school to encourage the rights to sanitation for all children, including children with disabilities through demand creation, increasing supply and enabling environment. These approaches have been proven to increase awareness in school children as agent of changes, improving access to accessible and girl-friendly toilet, and regulates school and health centres.

## BACKGROUND

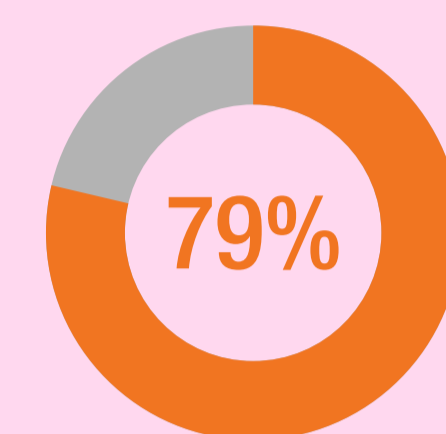
According to the Ministry of Education & Culture, there are a total of 2,212 special needs schools in Indonesia with 133,826 students. We also found that there are no promotions or IEC materials made available for students with disabilities in Eastern Indonesia, one of the poorest regions in Indonesia. Thus, making equitable and universal access to sanitation and Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) challenging.



43% schools are without gender-separated toilet



63% parents never explain about menstruation to their daughters



79% girls never change their sanitary pads while at school

## OUR APPROACH

### Demand Creation

**Awareness raising.** Teachers and students are trained as trainers in MHH. Students are trained as peer educators to convey MHH message to their peers and as an agent of change in their environment.

**Engaging men and boys.** Champion of Changes approach in engaging boys and female teacher champions to promote the importance of MHH and to increase awareness of male students in supporting their female peers to conduct MHH comfortably.

**Inclusive MHH IEC material.** To cater for all students, MHH handbook is printed in braille for students with visual impairment. Flipchart, videos and posters were developed for students with hearing and physical impairment.

### Increasing Supply

- Ramp and door large enough to accommodate wheelchair.
- Spare skirts and underwear made available for girls.
- Toilet with handrails and guiding block.
- Menstrual pad is available in the girls toilet.
- Gender-separated toilets that can be locked to provide safety and privacy.
- Waste bin is available in the toilet for safe disposal.

### Enabling Environment

1. Advocating the school committee to allocate funds for WASH/MHH facilities, which includes the provision on reusable menstrual pads to be available at schools.
2. MoU between schools and health centres (Puskesmas) to conduct regular monitoring and MHH support for Special Needs School (SLB).

## OUTCOMES

### Demand Creation

**80** teachers are trained in MHH, including teachers from 4 SLBs. Teachers are trained to educate on menstruation physiology, types of menstrual products, and how to manage menstruation, including supporting girls who menstruate.

**320** students are trained as peer educators in school sanitation and hygiene and MHH, 160 boys and 160 girls, including 16 students from special needs school.

Around 7,880 girls including 161 girls with disabilities, and 8,362 boys, including 208 boys with disabilities have increased awareness on MHH through regular MHH activities in school. The rate of bullying in schools are reported to decreased to **20%**.

Around **80%** schools in our project area have MHH IEC material available at schools, including for special needs schools (SLB).

*Learning about sanitation and menstrual hygiene has been made easy by mentors from Plan using interesting pictures and easy-to-understand texts*

-Soleha, a student with disability from Mataram-

### Increasing Supply

There are **72** schools with toilet accessible and MHH friendly toilet built in 6 different areas, including four special needs school in each four districts.

These inclusive and MHH friendly toilet can now be accessed by **7,880** girls including **161** girls with disabilities, they can manage their menstruation while at school.

In **98%** of schools, menstrual pads are now easily obtained because it is provided at the toilet, at the School Health Service (UKS) or can be bought in nearby canteen.

In **82%** of schools, girls are still attending classes during their period, therefore reducing the rate of absenteeism or skipping classes for girls.

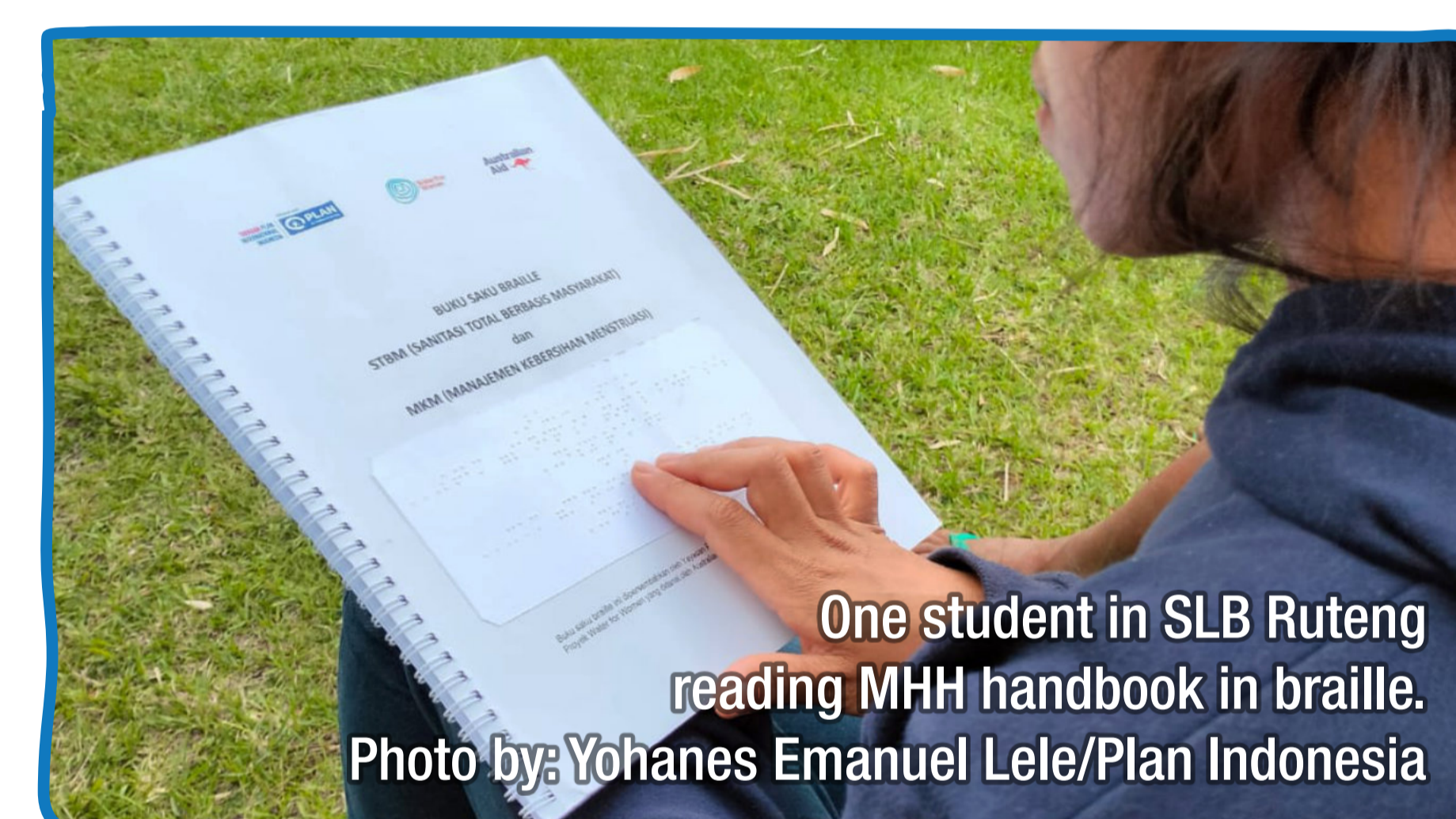
**300** girls and women received support of reusable underwear from the Modibodi, an Australian company focusing on sustainable menstrual products.

*I feel comfortable because now the school has provided menstrual health and hygiene kit, such as sanitary pad, spare underwear, soap, and waste bin available in the toilet*

-Lestika, student in special need school-

### Enabling Environment

There are **72** (100%) schools with WASH/MHH allocated in their Annual Budget Planning. Schools and health centres (Puskesmas) have developed agreements (MoU) to monitor sanitation and MHH in schools, using the budget from the Puskesmas.



One student in SLB Ruteng reading MHH handbook in braille. Photo by: Yohanes Emanuel Lele/Plan Indonesia



Accessible and MHH friendly toilet in SLB Mataram. Abdul Rohman/Plan Indonesia

## LESSONS LEARNED

1. We found that it is important to tailor MHH materials according to the audience, more specifically children with special needs and different types of disabilities.
2. Not all children with disability attended special needs schools (SLB), and therefore creating an inclusive environment in public settings is necessary.
3. Teachers have all the means to become a safe space for children to grow, therefore teachers training in MHH is important to continue the great work.
4. Existing disability organisation as a partner in MHH advocacy, including school accessibility check.



MHH campaign for students with hearing disability using Indonesia Sign Language in SLB Mataram. Widia Sastra Budi Santoso/Transform

For further information please scan this barcode

