



# Life Skills Training: Focus Latrines

Report on Primary and Secondary School Girls' Life Skills Training in Mekelle, Ethiopia  
July 1-5, 2013

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## Project Objectives:

*The Life Skills Training: Focus Latrines* was a one-week training course seeking to educate teenage girls about leadership, self-confidence, community building, leadership competencies and public speaking. The training sought to provide the necessary tools for girls to develop and implement a community campaign at the closure of the training – in this case a video campaign to acquire safe, single-sex, sanitary latrines.



## Background based on MCI's 2009-2010 Needs Assessment Findings

### I. Basic City Information

Mekelle is the sixth largest city in Ethiopia, established as an urban center in 1869-1873. Located 780 km to the north of Addis Ababa, it is the capital city of the Tigray National Regional State and one of northern Ethiopia's primary economic and education centers. It is currently the fastest growing city in Ethiopia and has expanded tremendously in recent years, incorporating smaller villages and towns in the immediate area. As of 2007, Mekelle City had a population 215,546 and an area of 109.36 square kilometers.

### II. Water and Sanitation Conditions in Mekelle's Schools

Mekelle has one of the highest poverty rates in Ethiopia, in part due to being located in a region

prone to recurrent drought. Inadequate water supply and lack of sanitation infrastructure has resulted in many households, schools and health facilities lacking access to water and basic waste removal. While the city government of Mekelle has made efforts in recent years to build public latrines, there is still a shortage of both latrines and latrine infrastructure for sanitary waste removal. There is no wastewater treatment network in Mekelle, nor is there any facility available to treat raw sewage removed from on-site systems.



While having an adequate water supply in schools is essential for maintaining basic sanitation and hygiene standards, only 73 percent of schools had water taps in 2007, leaving 15 of 56 schools with no connection to a water tap. Of the 41 schools with a tap connection, only two also had wells, many had only one available tap for the entire student body and not all had constant water service.

As of 2007, there was also a crucial lack of proper sanitation facilities in Mekelle's schools. Only 62 percent of schools had latrines, meaning that 21 out of 56 schools had no latrines at all. Inadequate latrine facilities can negatively impact attendance, especially in the likely case of parasitic illness. Girls are disproportionately affected by the lack of latrines, as it is common to stay home from school during menstruation if there is nowhere to change, wash or dispose of sanitary napkins.

The Ethiopian Ministry of Health has directed that institutional facilities be equipped with separate latrines for girls and boys, as well as urinals for boys. Yet in 2007, of the schools in Mekelle outfitted with pit latrines, five did not have separate facilities for girls and boys.

### III. Education and Girls' Education in Mekelle



The education system in Ethiopia consists of eight years of primary education, two years of lower secondary education, and two years of higher secondary education or technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

In 2008 there were 56 primary schools in Mekelle, 33 public and 23 private, with a total enrollment of 50,537 students. The number of primary schools had increased steadily from 2001 until 2008 to meet demand.

However, by 2008 there were comparatively few secondary schools - a total of 15, five public and 10 private, serving only 15,411 students. An additional 2,352 students enrolled in private secondary school in 2008.



Mekelle has reached gender parity in primary school. As of 2007, 51 percent of primary school students were girls. Additionally, in 2007 the general enrollment rates for secondary schools in Mekelle were much greater than both regional and national averages and balanced evenly between genders. However, the number of girls in preparatory school, grades 11-12, is consistently lower than the number of boys at this level, indicating girls' school participation rates decrease when they reach higher grades.

## Additional Research on Girls' Education and Attendance:

While there is little formal research from Mekelle to support the fact that girls habitually miss school due to menstruation; however, informal discussion groups and trainings led by Columbia University School of Nursing Clinical Instructor, Mary Moran, continuously circled back to the girls self-reporting missing school due to their menstruation. If girls miss school days every time they menstruate, they could be missing up to 20 percent of the school year – 20 percent of the material and 20 percent of classroom instruction. This has a huge affect on learning outcomes and quality of knowledge gain.

## Impact of MCI Research to Date:

- 1) Since the publication of MCI's needs assessments, 30 new latrines and 36 water points have been built. The Office of International Cooperation of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MASHAV) and Mekelle's own Education, Health and Water offices partnered to pay for the costs.
- 2) Professor Zvi Bentwich and his team from Ben Gurion University have carried out various initiatives linked to de-worming, including a de-worming campaign in Mekelle's primary schools and training Mekelle's doctors in de-working techniques, diagnosis and treatment of waterborne diseases.
- 3) Columbia University School of Nursing Clinical Instructor, Mary Moran, in collaboration with her organization Girls2Women, conducted two trainings for female student representatives from 19 of Mekelle's primary schools in making reusable sanitary cloth pads. The trainings were so successful that they have been institutionalized by the Midwifery School and turned into a textbook for distribution among secondary school girls.





## Project Overview:

The *Life Skills Training: Focus Latrines* was a one-week course for primary and secondary school girls from the greater Mekelle area. Of the selected seven participating schools, four female representatives were accompanied by one female teacher – resulting in a total of 35 trainees. The girls along with their teachers participated in a vigorous, interactive child-centered training program which sought to provide the girls with the skills necessary to become leaders within their community. The days were broken up into various topics focused on the main themes of building the girls' leadership skills, movie-making abilities, and a knowledge base concerning latrines and hygiene. The four initial training days provided the girls with ample time to discuss the issues, learn together and to grow as a group. The final day of the training program was reserved for the girls to film their latrines campaign video. Both trainers and participants were delighted with program outcomes.



## Beneficiaries:

*Direct Beneficiaries:* Direct beneficiaries of the training are 28 young women: four female representatives from each of seven primary and secondary schools around the Mekelle area. Additionally, seven teachers, one from each school, were trained alongside their students. The direct number of beneficiaries of the training totaled 35.

*Indirect Beneficiaries:* Indirect beneficiaries included the female classmates from the seven participating schools, who will learn many of the leadership lessons in their girls' clubs as well as in direct classroom instruction from participating teachers. Additionally, boys at the seven schools will be indirect beneficiaries of hygiene- and latrine-related changes at the school. School-age children across Mekelle will be additional distant indirect beneficiaries of training and resulting activities.



## Daily Training Outline:

*The Life Skills Training: Focus Latrines* focused on different topics each day. The training day began at 9AM and concluded at 5.30PM, with a break for lunch. Thus, the training was split into morning and afternoon sessions with tea breaks halfway through each session. Each session also had a mixture of team-building activities spread out among the academic lesson components. The outline for academic components of the training was as follows:

### Monday, July 1:

#### *Session 1: Introduction*

Activities established the norms for the training workshop, including setting rules, expectations and introductions. The latter part of the morning focused on a discussion of competencies (skills and abilities that everyone has) versus leadership competencies (skills and abilities needs to be a leader).

#### *Session 2: Leadership and Competencies*

Activities focused on leadership building.

The girls actively discussed what it meant to be a leader in their community, focusing on female and teen leadership. The group explored various leadership styles and discussed when each is most appropriate. Finally, each girl completed a SWOT (strengths and weakness assessment) of their leadership potential, focused on those areas they would like to improve upon and how.



### Tuesday, July 2:

#### *Session 1: Advocacy*

Activities focused upon establishing a common norm of what the group sought to advocate for and why. The girls discussed what the latrine situation was in each school and came to a consensus on why they saw this as a problem and how to change it.

#### *Session 2: Latrines and Sanitation*

Activities were geared towards interactively educating the girls on sanitation and hygiene issues related to latrines. The girls collaboratively explored various latrine models and the sanitary implications of each part of the latrine and ultimately discussed what was necessary to improve the sanitation situation in each of their schools.

### Wednesday, July 3:

#### *Session 1: Presentation Skills*

Activities equipped the girls with proper presentation skills focusing both upon the linguistic as well as the body language aspects of presentation. The girls learned about sensory imagery in presentation and the importance of properly defining an issue when campaigning for change.

#### *Session 2: Goal Setting*

Activities introduced the idea of "S.M.A.R.T. Goal Setting" – this is Strategic, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely Goals. The girls were asked to create a personal S.M.A.R.T. goal, as well as create a group S.M.A.R.T. campaign goal.

## **Thursday, July 4:**

### **Session 1: Description & Letter Writing**

Activities provided girls with the skills to describe their issues and concerns to donors and government officials as well as to write them effectively as part of a letter-writing campaign. Each school drafted a letter to the Mayor concerning the latrines situation in their school.

### **Session 2: Film Planning**

Activities prepared the girls to make a film. The girls learned how to film, record sound and sync the two. Additionally, the girls split themselves into four content development groups on the following:

Introduction to Mekelle, Latrines Problem, Latrines Proposal, Our Dream. They used the remainder of the day to write content for filming.



## **Friday, July 5:**

### **Session 1: Production Planning**

Mums2Mums, a local community NGO, came to speak briefly in the morning concerning future trainings and ways to keep the girls' new knowledge sustainable. The remainder of the morning was used for prop creation, costume development, dress rehearsals and some filming.

### **Session 2: Production Time**

The girls filmed their "Campaign for Safe Latrines" Advocacy Video, scheduled to premier at the Mekelle Donor Roundtable to take place in Addis Ababa, on October 4.

## **Challenges:**

There were a number of challenges encountered throughout this training, the simplest of which related to language. There was a great language barrier between the girls and the lead trainer. However, as the training progressed, they became more comfortable with her English and with asking questions about what they did not understand. The Mekelle Social Sector Specialist excelled in translating for the girls when necessary.

The more problematic challenges were logistical. Many of the girls had to come a great distance to attend the training, thus the timing of the training had to be modified. While it was originally agreed that we would not cover the cost of lunch, the girls made it clear that they would not be able to attend the training if lunch was not provided, also MCI met this need. Finally, the teachers attending the training were angry that they would not receive a stipend for the training session. Despite threatening not to attend, the teachers attended, though not always for the entire day. No stipend was provided to the teachers.

## Evaluation:

The performance evaluation was done in two parts. Both evaluations were very positive and supported the lead trainer’s understanding that the girls learned and retained a lot of information. The first evaluation was conducted by the girls on Thursday afternoon. Each school was asked to rank all activities – results are below. The second evaluation is a narrative written by co-trainer, translator and in-country Social Sector Specialist Aberash Abay Tadelle Gebru– see below.



### 1. Girls’ Evaluation:

The girls were asked to complete one evaluation per school of the training in terms of material to be put in the “brain, bag or bin”. The girls were provided with a list of all the learning activities done and asked to rank them as follows:

- Brain – Activities that were super. “Brain activities” are activities which the girls truly learned from and which the girls will draw upon in their daily lives.
- Bag – Activities that were okay. “Bag activities” are activities which the girls learned something from, but which they need more time to understand. Bag activities are also activities that provide the girls with useful information, but not information they feel they will draw upon in their daily lives.
- Bin – Activities that were bad. “Bin activities” are activities that the girls advocate not be included in the training, should it be repeated, and activities from which they felt they had learned nothing.

#### School 1: Hawelti Complete Primary School

Brain	Bag	Bin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team building games</li> <li>• Competencies &amp; leadership competencies</li> <li>• Latrines lesson</li> <li>• Sensory story-telling</li> <li>• S.M.A.R.T. goals<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• All other activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ---</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ---</li> </ul>

#### School 2: Qisante Complete Primary School

Brain	Bag	Bin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All other activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S.M.A.R.T. goals<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Sensory story-telling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ---</li> </ul>

#### School 3: Weldengus Secondary School

Brain	Bag	Bin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ---</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ---</li> </ul>

1. ‘S.M.A.R.T.’ goals: Strategic, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely Goals



*School 4: Adi Haqi Secondary School*

Brain	Bag	Bin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership lessons</li> <li>• Latrines lessons</li> <li>• Competencies &amp; leadership competencies</li> <li>• Sensory story-telling</li> <li>• Discussion of goals and dreams</li> <li>• Public speaking lessons</li> <li>• Hygiene lessons</li> <li>• Identify the problem</li> <li>• S.M.A.R.T. Goals</li> <li>• All other activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWOT analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ---</li> </ul>

*School 5: Felegehiwot School*

Brain	Bag	Bin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ---</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ---</li> </ul>

*School 6: Ayder Secondary School*

Brain	Bag	Bin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of goals vs. dreams</li> <li>• Identify the problem</li> <li>• S.M.A.R.T. Goals</li> <li>• Team building games</li> <li>• Latrines lessons</li> <li>• SWOT analysis</li> <li>• Leadership lessons</li> <li>• Competencies &amp; leadership competencies</li> <li>• Public speaking lessons</li> <li>• Hygiene lessons</li> <li>• Sensory story-telling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drawing latrines</li> <li>• Video preparation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ---</li> </ul>

*School 7: Adisalem Complete Primary School*

Brain	Bag	Bin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latrines lessons</li> <li>• Competencies &amp; leadership competencies</li> <li>• Discussion of goals vs. dreams</li> <li>• Sensory story-telling</li> <li>• S.M.A.R.T. Goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team building games</li> <li>• Letter writing lesson</li> <li>• Leadership lessons</li> <li>• SWOT analysis</li> <li>• Identify the problem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ---</li> </ul>

Overall, the girls ranked most of the activities as 'brain' activities. Additionally, there was no consensus on any one activities being a 'bag' activity, thus, all were useful to some. None of the activities was discarded.



## 2. Evaluation by Social Sector Specialist Aberash Abay Tadelle Gebru:

The training was conducted in Qisante Complete Primary School. There were about 35 participants from seven nominated government schools, of which seven were teachers who are the chairpersons of the girls clubs. These schools included: Ader Secondary School, Qisante Complete Primary School, Adisalem Complete Primary School, Felegehiwot School, Hawelti Complete Primary School, Adi Haqi Secondary School and Weldengus Secondary School. All schools were asked to send four student participants.

The training was good and participatory enough. All students were interested to say something and all felt happy. It was also good to have the training for them at this level. It is a good curriculum for this level, and in addition to the knowledge they received, it is good exposure for them.

Generally, the training was excellent and should be repeated to accommodate all schools.



## Successes:



The training overall was a great success. The girls had very positive things to say about their entire experience. They learned and grew an incredible amount. Many of the girls become friends and planned future times to meet and discuss in a girls' club setting. The skills the girls gained are all skills they believe they will be able to use moving forward. Finally, the film they created will have a lasting impact and will be used for future funding initiatives proposed at the Donor Roundtable for Mekelle, to take place in Addis Ababa in October 2013.