Recent studies on Menstrual Management for school girls in Zimbabwe

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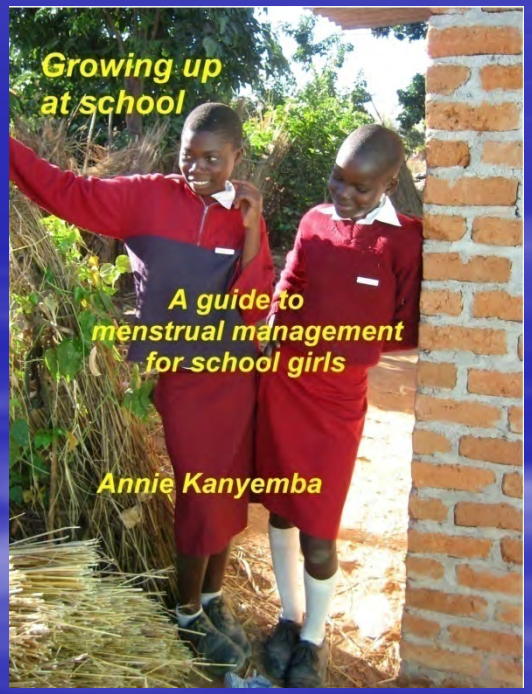
The plight of school girls, and particularly the problems they face related to menstrual management is becoming a more widely discussed issue these days.

And ways of solving this problem are long overdue.

I started looking at this topic myself at the end of 2010. We had been working for 3 years on a schools project related to promoting ecological sanitation in schools.

The relationship between sanitation, hygiene and the girl child and menstrual management became obvious.

One piece of work carried out by Marni Sommer in Tanzania drew our particular attention as it was so practical. It used a simple booklet to circulate information



This inspired us to make a book for our Zimbabwean school girls

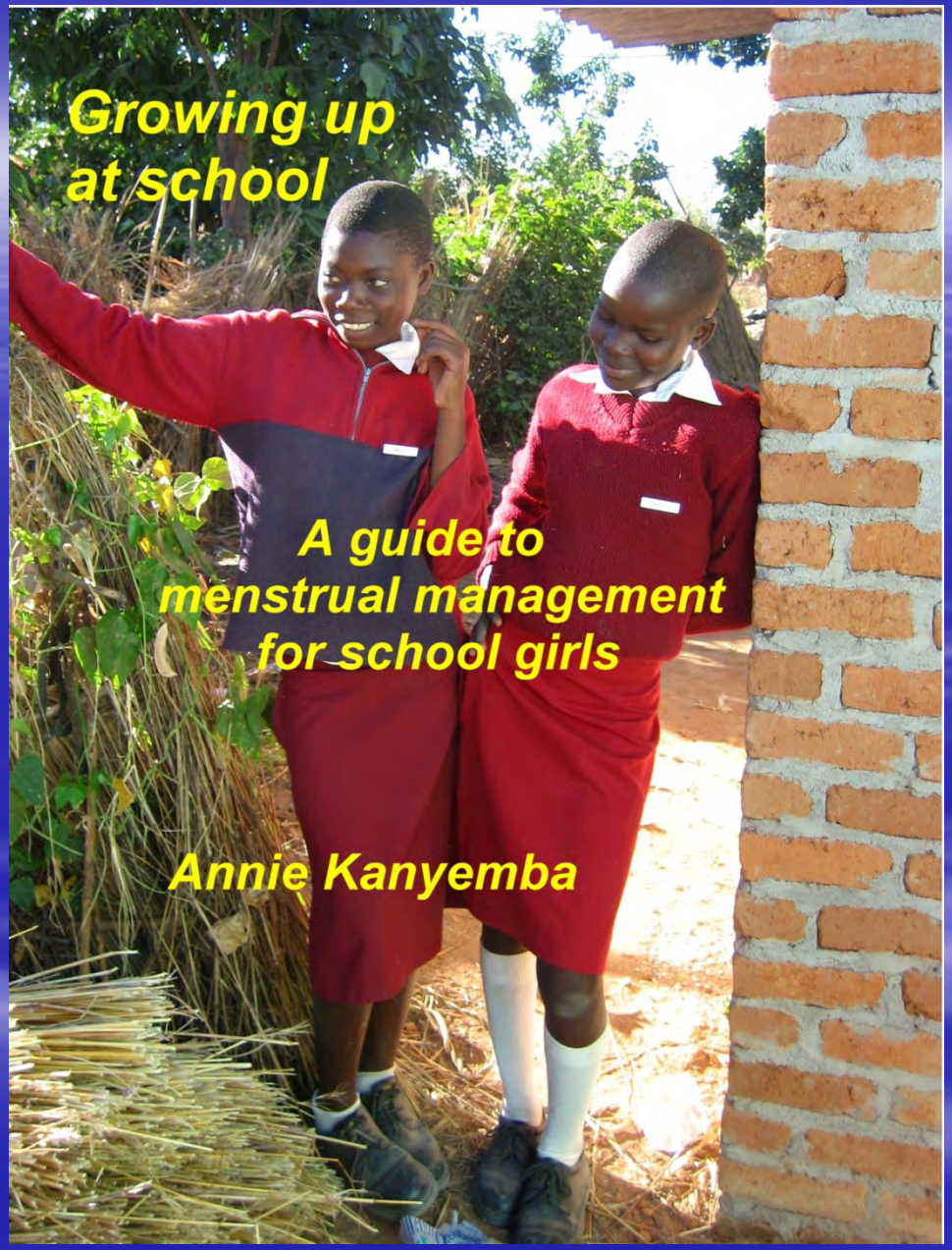
This work has involved discussions with the school girls and their teachers

I have visited several schools in both peri-urban and rural areas to interview the girls and find out about their problems.

Getting real stories from the girls about their menstrual problems was important

This formed the basis of the book I wrote

From these many visits and talks we have put together our own booklet for school, girls in Zimbabwe. This has already been translated into Shona and an Ndebele version is on the way



The book has been tested and revised

The discussion also raises many other questions and reveals how much more the girls need to know about menstruation and its management.

My booklet deals with several subjects including:

*explaining menstruation
*dealing with pain
*looking at traditional pads
*building up self esteem
*health and hygiene
*diet and exercise
*the girls' own stories
*talking about it more freely

The girls are very forthcoming when talking about their problems

One learns so much by listening

Home made low cost hygienic pads and pad holders are also being studied as part of this project

Commercially made pads may be too expensive or simply not available for most girls

Promotion is a big thing – we need ways to make people listen

One of my best friends, Malaika Mushandu, currently Miss Zimbabwe, is helping me with this project.

This will add glamour and attention to the plight of school girls.

We have studied the way girls use the Zimbabwean standard multi-compartment Blair VIP and also built a new communal hand washing tank which uses water economically.

Hygiene is very important in the management of menstruation

We still have much to learn and much to find out about practical methods of solving the plight of the girl child.

But we will succeed !!