Overcoming the Taboo: 
Addressing the
Menstrual Hygiene Management Needs of School Girls

Research and Monitoring Tools & Instruments
for MHM in WASH in Schools (WinS)

2nd Virtual MHM in WinS Conference
Columbia University & UNICEF
November 21, 2013
Inadequate water & sanitation facilities pose major impediments for school girls

- Proportions from surveyed low-income countries:
  - 49% of schools lack adequate water
  - 55% of schools lack adequate sanitation
Women and adolescent girls are using a clean menstrual management material to absorb or collect menstrual blood, that can be changed in privacy as often as necessary for the duration of a menstrual period, using soap and water for washing the body as required, and having access to facilities to dispose of used menstrual management materials.

- JMP 2012
What is necessary for menstrual hygiene management (MHM) with safety and dignity?

- access to accurate and pragmatic information
- access to menstrual hygiene materials (appropriate, affordable, hygienic)
- access to facilities that provide privacy for changing materials and washing and drying menstrual cloths
- access to water and soap within a place that provides an adequate level of privacy for washing body, cloths and clothes
- access to disposal facilities for used menstrual materials (disposal as a complete service)
Access to accurate and pragmatic information

- Evidence suggests girls have inadequate guidance and support on menstruation and MHM in many middle and low-income countries

- One solution ~ the provision of menstrual education through girl’s puberty books
Access to *menstrual hygiene materials*

- Affordable, culturally appropriate, hygienic sanitary materials
- Provision of underwear for some girls
- Disposable or reusable solutions
Access to facilities that provide privacy

- Adequate numbers of safe, private, clean latrines/toilets with doors and locks
- Water available inside latrines/toilets
- Sufficient space for washing of menstrual stains on uniforms and/or washing out used menstrual cloths
**Access to water and soap**

- Provision of water and soap inside latrines/toilets
- Incorporation of need for water and soap (and other interventions) into WASH in Schools (WinS) national strategies
Access to disposal facilities

- Adequate disposal facilities in latrine/toilet stalls (e.g. dustbin with lid) and disposal system within school grounds (e.g. incinerator or pit for burning or burying)

- Disposal must be culturally appropriate
Recommendations from the 1st virtual MHM conference for WinS

- Document various MHM practices and the barriers girls face in various contexts
- Develop guidelines for integration of a minimum package for MHM into existing WinS programs
- Engaged with national governments from the very beginning when initiating MHM activities to ensure buy-in and additional support for multi-sectoral involvement
Rationale for the 2\textsuperscript{nd} virtual MHM in WinS Conference

Recommendation #1: Document various MHM practices and the barriers girls face in various contexts

\sim need for adequate research tools and instruments for exploring MHM barriers facing school girls and female teachers (and tools for monitoring MHM interventions)
Agenda for Today

- Opening remarks - Columbia University & UNICEF
- 16 presentations from around the world
- Presentations from academics, NGOs, private sector, social entrepreneurial groups, UNICEF offices
- Group breakout to discuss MHM toolkit & the 3rd annual virtual MHM in WinS conference
Expected Outcomes
from 2\textsuperscript{nd} virtual MHM in WinS Conference

- Sharing of lessons learned/research approaches
- UNICEF & Columbia University publication ~ templates on research/monitoring activities
- MHM Research instruments/tools for UNICEF toolkit publication
- Ideas for theme of 3\textsuperscript{rd} virtual MHM in WinS Conference in 2014