TRANSLATING SILENCE INTO ACTION: POLICY AND PRACTICE ON MHM

EVIDENCE FOR INTERVENTIONS

WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL (WSSCC)

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BACKGROUND: WSSCC AND MHM

Global Level
• Equity is centre stage in JMP post-2015 targets and indicators: « lifecycle approach » and MHM
• Evidence-based lobbying
• Promoting global advocacy and facilitating partnerships

Regional Level
• SACOSAN conference includes MHM and equity in the declarations (2011, 2013)
• Revison of the eThekwini declaration to monitor inequalities in access to WASH in Africa
• Reaching the Unreached study with FANSA, WSSCC Film

National Level
• India, Senegal, Nepal, Cambodia
The MHM Lab at the Nirmal Bharat Yatra
2 October to 19 November, 2012
KEY COMPONENTS OF THE INTERVENTION

• **Tablet survey and Focus group discussions:** To understand girls and women’s knowledge of MHM and their practices, to facilitate reflection on perceptions and beliefs.

• **Make your own napkin:** Partner organisation Goonj demonstrated how to make reusable cloth sanitary pads at home to manage menstruation hygienically.

• **Breaking the silence:** Making and tying a 28 bead bracelet (menstrual cycle) and taking the pledge to break the silence and to feel proud, not ashamed of menstruation
KEY COMPONENTS OF THE INTERVENTION

MHM «Loop»
Time required: 40-60 minutes
Desired number of participants per focus group: 10
Essential: a quiet, safe place for women and girls to speak openly
Focus on the «lifecycle approach»

Breaking the silence
Safe reuse and disposal solutions
Managing menstruation hygienically

WSSCC Approach to MHM
RESULTS

Breaking the Silence
➢ Only 30.2% knew about menstruation before menarche
➢ 73.6% felt that menstrual blood was dirty blood and not clean blood

Managing Menstruation Hygienically
➢ 98.4% faced restrictions while menstruating

Safe Reuse and Disposal Solutions
➢ No disposal at school: 88.3%, at work: 79.4%
➢ Almost all preferred cloth to commercial pads
➢ Used materials were discarded in rivers or streams or in a pit latrine or shallow pit
RESULTS

On average our survey respondents are changing their pads, or cloths twice a day (2.18777 times a day)

All school girls and female teachers interviewed (100%) said they did not change their pad at school because of lack of disposal option/shame. This meant wearing the same pad for at least 6 hours on school days. They demand change - even if only a bin, running water and availability of emergency napkins

In several schools, incinerators were constructed, bins provided and school staff committed to talking about the subject without shame.
MHM ToolKit: 1ST Edition
Research Needs

- Safe and environmentally responsible disposal at household, school and community level
- Economic cost to the community of restrictions for women and girls during menstruation
- Practitioner research on impact of delivering messages through school vis-à-vis other methods
- Importance of handwashing after handling menstrual materials
- Role of mandatory guidance on commercial packaging for hygienic use and safe disposal
- Is there a menstrual material ladder?
SEEDS OF CHANGE

Key pieces of the puzzle: The case of India

- Strong evidence from the ground
- Building support
- Partnerships
- Networked advocacy
- Media outreach
- Identification of research gaps
- Commissioned research
- Policy linkages at early stages
- Policy change in the NBA
- Linked budgets
- Training on MHM for key actors in partnership with states
- Communities of practice in local language
- Feedback loops
ADDITIONAL INTERVENTIONS

• Celebrating Womanhood High-Level meeting, Geneva, Switzerland, March 2013

• Women Deliver Conference, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, May 2013

• Equity and Inclusion Training, Dakar, Senegal, September 2013

• Menstrual Hygiene Management Training of Master Trainers, New Delhi, India, September 2013

• SACOSAN V Conference, Kathmandu, Nepal, October 2013

• Gender and WASH workshop –WSSCC. SHARE, WSP, New Delhi, India, December, 2013
NEXT STEPS

Joint £400,000 Request for Proposals with SHARE
http://www.shareresearch.org/NewsAndEvents/Detail/SHARE_WSSCC_joint_RFP_women_and_sanitation_India

- The conditions and effects of WASH in health facilities, particularly around childbirth
- Operational research into menstrual hygiene management
  - Psycho-social stress linked to ignorance, taboos, shame and silence around menstruation
  - The link between menstrual hygiene and infections and/or other health related impacts
  - Operational research on the design and unit costs for safe reuse and disposal options
- Psycho-social stress resulting from violence experienced by women in the course of using sanitation facilities or practicing open defecation.
- The practice of limiting, postponing or reducing food and liquid intake to control the urge to urinate or defecate: the prevalence of this behaviour and related health risks.
Pledge for Girls and Women

I will break the silence on menstruation
I will not feel shy; I will take pride
I will spread the word outside and inside the home

Thank You