Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Virtual Conference

September 27, 2012

Co-hosted by
Columbia University & UNICEF
Introductions

Online

- UNICEF country offices (WASH, Education)
- NGOs working in education, WASH, MHM, gender
- Researchers from education, water, sanitation

In-Person

- Columbia University students & faculty (public health, education)
- UNICEF Headquarters (education, WASH, gender, health)
- NGOs working in WASH, education, water, health
- Social entrepreneurs working on sanitary pad production
Today’s Objectives

• To discuss and document the range of MHM activities being initiated or implemented in UNICEF countries

• To share lessons learned from MHM activities with the broader WinS community

• To better understand the barriers girls are facing managing menses in various contexts, and the ways of overcoming existing challenges

• To synthesize the MHM-related experiences of UNICEF countries in development and humanitarian contexts to provide guidance for countries and organizations interested in initiating MHM-related activities
Additional Objective

Identifying 4-5 practices underway in UNICEF countries that can be recommended for interested countries.
MHM Conference Key Questions

• How can other countries initiate MHM-related research and/or practice?

• What are MHM-related programming gaps (e.g. manuals, intervention design, M&E) for implementing countries?

• What is the potential for scaling up MHM in WinS? What are the barriers and potential avenues?
The importance of Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM)

• Growing interest in MHM for school girls (and for girls and women outside of school)

• Recognition that many schools lack adequate water and sanitation facilities for girls (and female teachers)

• Realization of the gap in pragmatic guidance being provided to girls reaching puberty about menarche and MHM
Growing attention to MHM

• At the local level, new research and numerous grassroots and other programs focused on MHM beginning around the world

• At the country level ~ 16+ countries responded to participate in this virtual conference

• At the global level ~ MHM is now a sub-group of the JMP’s hygiene working group advocating for its inclusion in the post-2015 goals
What does MHM refer to?

**Menstrual hygiene management:**

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.

“Both the personal MHM definition (the hygienic behaviour) and the public necessities of MHM (including safe and secure facilities, pragmatic information, materials and disposal) are needed.”

- JMP Report 2012
What does MHM in schools include?

Acceptable menstrual hygiene management facilities:

- provide privacy for changing materials and for washing body with soap and water
- provide access to water and soap within a place that provides an adequate level of privacy for washing stains from clothes and re-usable menstrual materials
- includes access to disposal facilities for used menstrual materials (from collection point to final disposal)

- JMP Report 2012
The growth in global MHM activities

- Increasing numbers of research studies (and publications) underway
- Growing attention to programming through national governments, NGOs, donors, and UN agencies
- Numerous grassroots sanitary pad production projects starting up in countries around the world
- Interdisciplinary efforts growing – water, sanitation, education, health, gender, etc.
The Growth in Attention to MHM

• Eight years ago ~ very few research articles, programs, or mention of MHM in the literature or organization reports

• Since that time, growing interest from a range of fields to address the issue:
  - public and environmental health research (e.g. watsan)
  - social entrepreneurship (e.g. sanitary pad production)
  - girls’ education and WASH (e.g. school facilities & info)
  - global policy dialogue around MHM
MHM in humanitarian emergencies: Gaps and recommendations

Article Published in Waterlines (2012)

✓ An effort to begin to document the recommendations of key multi-disciplinary experts working in humanitarian response on effective approaches to MHM in emergency contexts
✓ A review of the existing literature, tools, policies
✓ Aimed at identifying gaps in research, program & policy

✓ Key findings:
  ✓ A strong and growing interest in addressing MHM but lack of systematic guidance on how to most effectively respond
  ✓ Rich expertise among various organizations/experts with consensus on priority gaps in information and recommendations for future
Today’s Timeline

• The daytime webex will run from 8:45am – 5pm (NYC time)

• The evening webex will run from 11pm – 2am (NYC time)

• All the webex presentations will be recorded and posted on the WASH in Schools website after the conference
Outline for Today

Session I: Exploring the MHM barriers faced by girls  (9:30-11am)
- Brief introduction to research
- Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Bolivia
- Discussion

Session II: Approaches to addressing MHM for girls  (11:15-12:45pm)
- Malawi, Tanzania, Nigeria, Ethiopia
- Discussion

Session III: MHM in humanitarian emergencies  (1:30-3pm)
- Somalia, Copenhagen, UNICEF HQ
- Discussion
Outline for Today (con’t)

**Discussion:** Group Work and Plenary  
*(3:15-4:30pm)*  
What are 4-5 practices underway in UNICEF countries that can be recommended for interested countries?

**Wrapping Up:** UNICEF & Columbia University  
*(4:30-5pm)*

**Evening Session:** Sessions I, II, and III  
*(11pm-2am)*  
- Brief Introduction  
- Philippines, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan  
- Wrap up
Synthesis Document
(to be published and disseminated to UNICEF country offices)

• Two doctoral students from Columbia University taking careful notes of the presentations today

• Summary publication will include:
  - Introduction to MHM
  - Case study examples from all the presenting countries
  - Recommendations for initiating/implementing MHM activities in new contexts and gaps for future attention