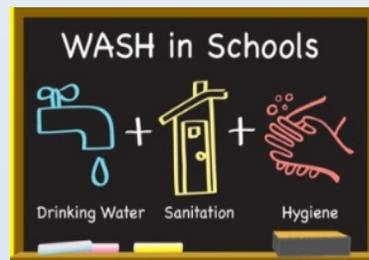


# Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Virtual Conference

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.”

# 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)*

# 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