

# Menstrual Hygiene Management in Malawian Schgools



Presented by  
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# Presentation outline

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1. Key components of the programme
2. Background – the local context
3. Current interventions
4. Lessons learnt
5. Future plans

# **Approaches to addressing MHM for girls**

## Key Components of the programme

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- Capacity building in menstrual hygiene management
- Provision of separate latrines for boys and girls
- Provision of sanitary kits for girls

## Background – the local context

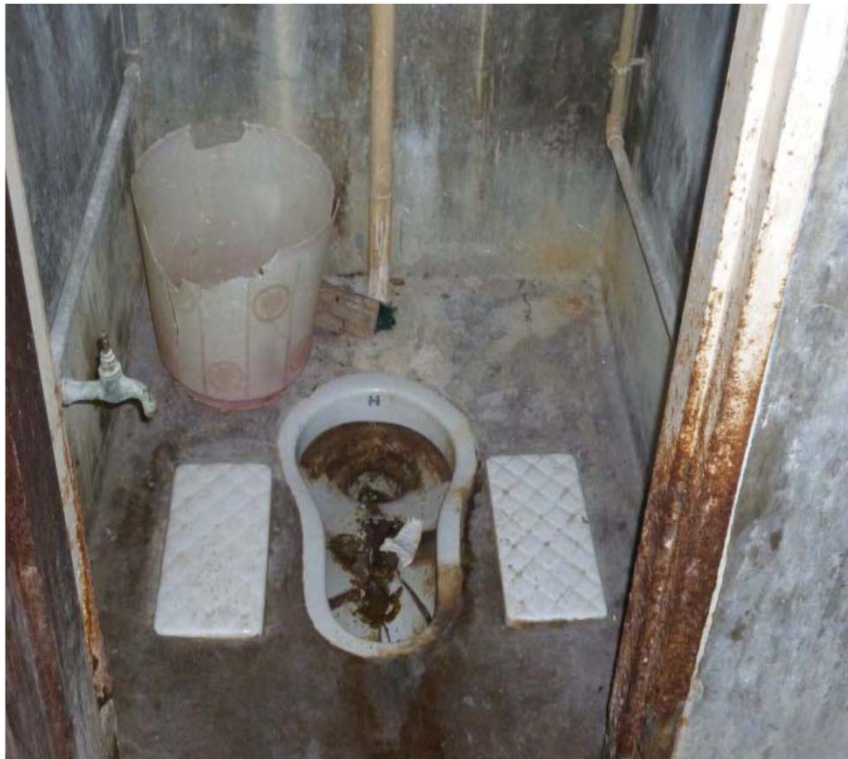
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- Ministry of Education WASH study done in 2008 shows that only 23% of primary schools have sanitation of ‘acceptable quality and quantity’, with 81% lacking hand-washing facilities. This study covered 5379 schools out of 5460 schools (98.5%)
- In 2008, Malawi primary schools, had a total of 15,473 improved latrines in use for female pupils. With a primary school enrolment of 1,773,369 girls, this represents a ratio of 1 improved latrine for every 115 girls.
- There are various cultural beliefs surrounding menstruation. Ignorance about menstrual issues is prevalent not only amongst schoolgirls but also in communities.

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- Parents do not talk to their children about menstruation – Menstruation is seen as ‘strictly secret’,
  - Often it is the Aunts who provide advice on how to make the local sanitary pad (from old clothes), to stop playing with non-menstruating friends and not talk/chat with boys.
  - In some ethnic groups, arrangements are even made for sexual initiation by a man called a ‘fisi’

Source: MoEST, Malawi School WASH, 2008: A Status Report on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene in Primary Schools

# The situation....





## UNICEF supported toilets



## UNICEF supported urinals





## Current interventions

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- **MHM Education** – usually girls do not get appropriate education on MHM. Mother groups have been established in schools to among other things provide MHM education to girls. These have been provided with a manual with a wide range of topics concerning girls education including MHM
- **Providing appropriate sanitary facilities** – in most schools, toilets are dilapidated and offer no privacy. UNICEF supports construction of separate sanitary facilities for boys and girls which also have doors for privacy
- **Provision of sanitary pads** – in 2 districts Chikwawa and Mangochi, UNICEF is piloting provision of pads to adolescent girls. In addition, Mother groups have been trained to make local sanitary towels for girls

## Lessons learnt

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- Appropriate knowledge on MHM is crucial so that girls have appropriate knowledge. This reduces the negative cultural and traditional beliefs on menstruation
- Training communities on local sanitary towel making is a good investment as most rural communities cannot afford to purchase sanitary pads.
- Provision of separate latrines for girls and boys which also offer privacy is another good investment as it reduces absenteeism among adolescent girls



**Sambani M'manja Ndi Sopo**

- 1 Mukachoka kuchimbudzi
- 2 Musanajambe kudya kapena kudzetsa ana
- 3 Musanakonze kapena kuphika chikudya
- 4 Mukatha kusintha kapena kuchapa thewera la muano

**Sambani M'manja Pa Nthawi 4 Zojenera izi**

**A homemade, washable, cotton sanitary pad, which is made at school and doubles as underwear**



## Future plans for UNICEF Malawi

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- Construct urinals with privacy walls and as part of standard school toilet block, include one toilet which is bigger than the rest, to cater for a bucket of water and hand washing stand
- Provide a sanitary kit (containing pads, underwear and soap) for adolescent girls in districts where UNICEF will focus its interventions in the next 4 years
- Build capacities of mother groups in local sanitary towels/ pads production. These will be reusable as they use local cloth which can be washed
- Reproduce the Menstrual Hygiene Booklet for distribution to adolescent girls in schools

## Other partners working on MHM interventions

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- **Save the Children Malawi** – providing sanitary facilities
- **Development Aid from People to people** – toilet construction
- **Water Aid Malawi** – sanitary facilities provision
- **Campaign for Female Education** – providing bursaries and sanitary pads
- **Forum for Women Educationalists in Malawi (FAWEMA)** – providing bursaries and pads
- **COOPI** – Toilet construction
- **DFID** – supporting school construction which includes sanitary facilities

For more information, please contact

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