BASELINE STUDY ON MHM IN SCHOOLGIRLS IN SIERRA LEONE

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OUTLINE

- Basic Package of WASH in Schools Programme
- Current WASH in Schools Status
- Current interventions on MHM
- Key Findings on MHM
- Lessons Learned
- Future Plan on WASH in Schools Programme at Scale
BASIC PACKAGE OF WASH IN SCHOOLS

- Provision of Child Friendly WASH facilities
- Support for the establishment of community-based operation and maintenance
  - Training for School Management Committees
  - Training for hand pump caretakers
  - Development of School Action Plans
- Conduct School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE) and hygiene promotion in school
- Implementation of School-Led Total Sanitation (SLTS) for community outreach
WATER SUPPLY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- Compliance to the national standards is a big challenge.
- Functionality remains areas for improvement.

Source: MoHS, MEST and UNICEF (2012), Baseline Study for Rural WASH in Schools Programme
SANITATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- Compliance to the national standards is a big challenge.
- Maintenance remains areas for improvement.
- Existence, hygiene & privacy are contributing factors to OD.

Source: MoHS, MEST and UNICEF (2012), Baseline Study for Rural WASH in Schools Program
Handwashing practices remain low regardless of accessibility of HW facilities.

Girls generally practice HWWS more than boys.

**Observed handwashing behavior in primary schools where HW facilities are available**

**After use of toilet**
- No HW: 50.3%
- HW with water only: 30.5%
- HW with soap: 19.3%

**Before eating**
- No HW: 52.8%
- HW with water only: 41.5%
- HW with soap: 0.0%

Source: MoHS, MEST and UNICEF (2012), Baseline Study for WASH in Schools Programme
## Correlations with Diarrhea Incidence and Absenteeism

- **Positive relations between lower diarrhea rates and existence of WASH facilities up to the standards.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School has...</th>
<th>Mean diarrhea prevalence rate</th>
<th>Compared to...</th>
<th>Mean diarrhea prevalence rate</th>
<th>Difference in mean diarrhea prevalence rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to standard HW facility</td>
<td>8.40%</td>
<td>No up to standard HWM facility</td>
<td>15.70%</td>
<td>-7.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water point up to standard</td>
<td>12.60%</td>
<td>Water point not up to standard</td>
<td>16.20%</td>
<td>-3.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to a Latrine</td>
<td>14.70%</td>
<td>No latrine</td>
<td>17.00%</td>
<td>-2.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Correlation between girls’ absenteeism and separated latrines.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children declaring themselves as absent</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11-13 years</td>
<td>14-19 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to latrines that are separated for boys/girls</td>
<td>18.80%</td>
<td>17.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to latrines that are NOT separated for boy/girls</td>
<td>17.70%</td>
<td>31.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>-1.10%</td>
<td>13.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MoHS, MEST and UNICEF (2012), Baseline Study for WASH in Schools Programme
MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT (1)

- Development and distribution of 155,373 MHM Booklets to primary schools in 9 districts (since 2010)
- Distribution of MHM Booklets in the SSHE toolkits to all 5,931 primary schools nationwide (2011-12)
- A special session on MHM at SSHE Teachers Training (since 2011) – covering 2,000 teachers
- A special session on MHM at SSHE Training for SSHE promoters at 314 target primary schools – covering 2,512 SSHE promoters
MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT (2)

- Encourage communities to add locally made private space in front of latrine blocks
- Experimental pilot on girls urinals and a washing room in schools in Freetown

School latrines, provided with private entry made of local materials
MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT (3)

- Baseline Study in six rural districts (2012)

**Target Areas:**
6 rural districts

**Data Collection Methods:**
- One-to-one interviews with 10% of student population at sampled schools (319 girls who attain menarche)
- Interviews with 285 head teachers about the enabling environment in schools
- Focus groups with 202 girls over 9 years old about knowledge, attitudes and practices on MHM
MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT (4)

- MHM Qualitative Research in Urban Freetown (2012)
  - UNICEF and Emory Center for Global Safe Water Partnership
  - IDIs and FGDs with 97 girls in 8 schools and 2 communities
  - KIIIs with 16 teachers and school administrators in 8 schools
KEY FINDINGS ON MHM

Source: Emory University and UNICEF (2012), MHM in Schools: A Multi-Setting Approach for Applied Learning and Improved Practices
Enabling Environment for MHM

- The majority of schools does not have adequate WASH facilities for girls to manage menstruation.
- 6.9% of schoolgirls indicated that their schools had water available in a private area for girls to wash themselves.
- Only 0.7% of schools had sanitation facilities available for girls to change sanitary cloths while at school.
- Only 0.7% of schools had sanitary cloths available at school.
- Only 7.7% of schoolgirls believed that teachers were very supportive of girls during menstruation.

Source: MoHS, MEST and UNICEF (2012), Baseline Study for WASH in Schools Programme
80.6% of schoolgirls had knowledge of menstruation before they had attained menarche.

The most common sources of information were mother (57.7%), sisters (36.0%) and friends (18.7%).

Girls have limited information and knowledge on menstruation.

Source: MoHS, MEST and UNICEF (2012), Baseline Study for WASH in Schools Programme
Majority of schoolgirls perceived that menstruation is a normal part of growing up for all girls.

74.2% agreed that all girls should be in school even when menstruating.

However, the majority of girls attach some levels of shame and un-cleanliness to menstruation.

**KEY FINDINGS ON MHM - ATTITUDES**

- Menstruation is a normal part of growing up for all girls: 87.3%
- All girls should be in school, even during menstruation: 56.7%
- Menstruation is unclean and dirty: 34.6%
- You feel shy during your period: 40.9%
- You don't like to stand up in class when on your period: 26.8%
- You prefer staying home/not to go out during your period: 19.0%

**Source:** MoHS, MEST and UNICEF (2012), Baseline Study for WASH in Schools Programme
The majority of schoolgirls used fragments of cloth which were washed and re-used.

The majority were unable to afford disposable sanitary towels.

96.8% of schoolgirls washed their sanitary cloths with soap and water.

Only 22.6% always dried their sanitary cloths in the sun.

- Keep discreet about menstruation
- Beliefs in the power of witchcraft, who might stop you from having children
- Risks of genital infections from bacterial and fungi
Half of schoolgirls practicing some forms of restriction or exclusion during menstruation.

Of these, 1 in 5 schoolgirls did not attend school.

The mean days missed in school by these girls in the past 3 months was 4.2 days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restrictions during menstruation</th>
<th>Don't attend religious functions</th>
<th>Don't play/do physical activity</th>
<th>Don't go to school</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>85.3%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reported reasons for missing school during menstruation:

- Pain discomfort: 48.4%
- Fear of leakage: 38.7%
- Shame: 32.3%
- Heavy blood flow: 29.0%
- Lack of water supply for cleaning: 25.8%
- Lack of privacy for cleaning: 25.8%
- Lack of disposal system for cloths: 16.1%

Source: MoHS, MEST and UNICEF (2012), Baseline Study for WASH in Schools Programme
LESSONS LEARNED

- Girls sanitation facilities, including urinals in schools are not supporting girls in the current settings.

- Distribution of MHM Booklets alone did not have any impact.
  - It needs to be incorporated into practical training or activities of WASH in Schools Programme.

- Being as a part of the SSHE Toolkits and SSHE Teachers Training led to systematic dissemination of MHM knowledge and practices.

- Teachers, especially male teachers need more training in MHM and its mainstreaming in the school settings.
FUTURE PLAN OF WINS AT SCALE

- Redesigning of school latrines with a washing facility within a cubicle for girls.
- Strengthen SMC Training in school management, including management of recurrent costs.
- Advocacy for MHM to be incorporated into the curriculum.
- Continuation of having a MHM session at SSHE Teachers Training.
- Pilot peer education on MHM through SHCs with the MHM Booklets.
Thank you!

For further questions, please contact the following:
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School latrines before the intervention at King Fahad Primary School, Freetown

Drainage of waste water goes through the classroom
School latrines after the intervention at King Fahad Primary School, Freetown

Drainage of waste water covered for hygiene & safety
SCHOOL WASH FACILITIES IN SIERRA LEONE

Standard school latrine with a special cubicle for children with disabilities
SCHOOL HEALTH CLUB

SHC demonstrating at RC Primary School Dandabu, Pujeahun
SSHE Teachers Training at Freetown Teachers College with the SSHE toolkit