Participatory MHM kit to develop school based MHM action plan

Category: Wins4 Girls and Campaigning on eradicating at least one key MHM related myth affecting adolescent girls

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Study context

Sri Lankan Population: 20.3 million
Northern Province: 1.1 million majority are Hindus
Girls population: 132,500
Study context

- Since 2007 at subnational level
- From 2010 onwards up streamed to national level and this is presently being brought at scale at national level.

- Revision of sanitation and hand washing designs together with Menstrual Hygiene focus
- Introducing child friendly water and sanitation models and group hand washing linking with mid-day meals
- Categorizing schools with sanitation coverage norms (hardware based)
- Categorizing schools with three star levels (software) based on 22 indicators scoring.

**WinS 4 Girls: under WASH in Schools Launched in 2014**
Initial steps on WinS 4 Girls conducted by provincial department of education to identify the realities

- A round of discussions with 120 girls and 5 health teachers

The Findings were in year 2014 from May to July

- Irregular attendance among lower secondary girls (grade 6 to 9) were very much prevalent

- Education performance levels among girls, participation in sports and cultural activities minimized

- The social and cultural norms did not allow the school community to discuss MHM issues in detail

- MHM was more than just provision of disposal bins in toilets or making availability of sanitary napkins in schools

- These findings leads to the development of participatory kit

  - However there was no solid evidence-based and detailed analysis conducted in this regard.
Need arose to create a conducive environment for discussions about MHM

Partnership

- UNICEF, Provincial Department of Education, Provincial Department of Health and NGOs
- Created a Participatory MHM kit
  - UNICEF given technical guidance
  - NGOs’ participatory experts assisted in developing the kit
  - Provincial Department of Education developed the kit with 7 steps
Step 1: Community stories about village ceremony when a girl attain her age
Step 2: Understanding the adolescent girls’ and boys’ feelings with fun activities
Step 3: Identifying existing myths associated with menstruation in a specific community

Overcoming the Taboo
Step 4: Identifying the existing food related myths within the community
Step 5: Identifying those who faced the problem due to lack of menstrual hygiene management skills in schools
Step 6: Identifying suitable solutions with available resources within or around the schools
Step 7: Development of action plan for schools based on the discussions

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<tr>
<th>Immediate actions by school community by Girl child, Hygiene club, Sectional head, Principal with a time line</th>
<th>Solutions expected from community (SDA) and when to request them</th>
<th>Solutions expected from ministry of education and when to request them</th>
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Initiation of MHM under WinS

Students’ Being discussed MHM issues in a fun way

MHM trainers
Successes so far are:
(by using the Participatory MHM kit)

- Schools included MHM in their regular School Development Plans (SDP) for future interventions.
- Advocacy point:
  - Girls to drink a very little amount of water during menstruation.
  - Action taken through health experts – (Visiting Obstetrician and Gynecologist (VOGs) and reproductive health officials)
- Provincial health ministry linked with migrated Sri Lankan doctors in America for establishing community based sanitary napkin production units.
Challenges:
- Most of the school principals are men and need major mind shift to address the issues in school level.
- The knowledge and access to information in urban schools and rural schools are not equal.
- Most of the myths are in rural setups.

- **Recommendations for adaptation:** An evaluation of the MHM program to improve the participatory kit before mainstreaming and scaling up.
Conclusions

The developed kit was field tested in 12 schools in Northern Sri Lanka. It break the silence and made the girls talk on issues without hesitation.

The advocacy kits available in Provincial Department of education and it will be presented in WinS ILE which was held from

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Thank you