

Supporting Tanzanian School Girls with their Menstrual Hygiene Management

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Thematic session II: Approaches to addressing MHM for girls

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Outline of the presentation

1. WASH in Schools context in Tanzania
2. MHM as part of improving WASH in Schools
3. Use of Growth & Changes booklet
4. Sensitization materials and lesson plans
5. MHM in the School WASH Guidelines
6. Experience with incinerators
7. Conclusions & Way Forward

School WASH Context in Tanzania

Mapping of all schools in 16 districts revealed:

- Latrine numbers:
 - 11% meets minimum standard
 - 26% of schools have > 100 pupils/ latrine or no latrines at all
- 9% of school latrines are clean
- 1% of schools have soap available
- Water facilities
 - **not** available in 38% of the schools
 - **non-functional** in 46% of the cases

On top of this, menstruating girls have to cope with:

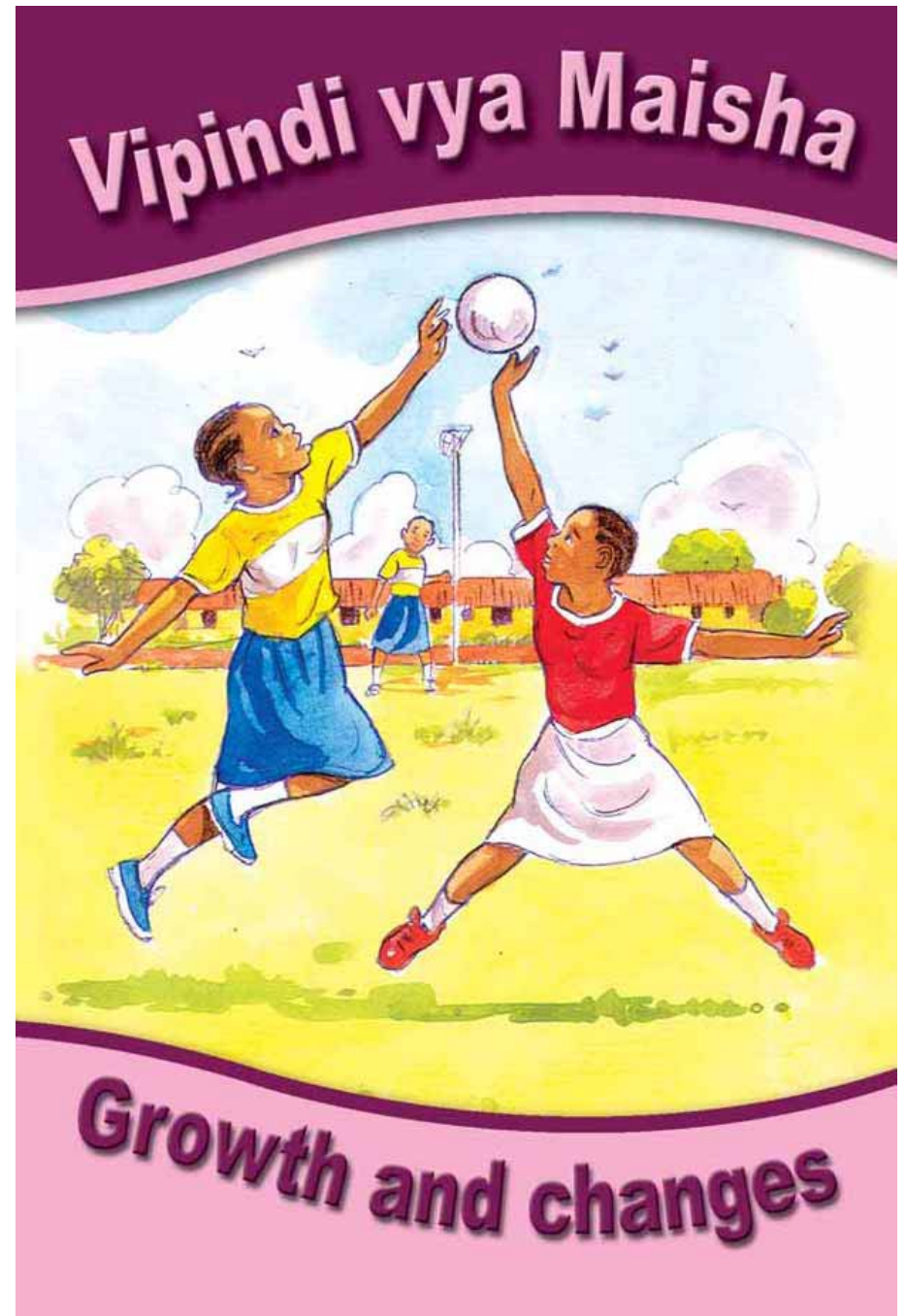
- 52% of the girl latrines do **not** have doors
- 63% of the school latrines have no place to dispose sanitary pads

Improving MHM as part of improving WASH in Schools

- UNICEF put WinS amongst its priorities of its WASH programme
- Both MHM and access for disabled “mainstreamed”
- Developing National SWASH guidelines and toolkits
(partnership MoEVT/ SNV/ UNICEF & others)
- Piloting of the guidelines ⇒ feedback from the field
- Getting Growth & Changes booklet to girls
(partnership Dr. M. Sommer/ TWESA/ UNICEF)
 - Widely distributed
 - Tested its use and effectiveness
 - Teacher sensitization materials developed

Growth & Changes

- Booklet about puberty including how to manage menstruation
- Distributed to 55,000 girls of standards 5 to 7 of primary school in 4 districts
- Teachers were provided with draft “sensitisation materials” incl lesson plans
- Girls’ KAP about puberty issues tested before and after reading the book
- Teachers/ girls feedback on materials/ book collected



Positive feedback on Growth and Changes

Girls

- Liked it **a lot** stating things like
 - *“each girl should have it”*
 - *“boys also need something like this”*
 - stressed that nobody tells them about it
- Learned a lot
 - post-tests of about a 1,000 girls showed significant improvement compared to pre-test
- Feedback revealed a lot of fear amongst girls around the onset of menstruation

Demand for the booklet

- Many requests from NGOs for copies
- Reprint done by FHI, USAid funded

Sensitization materials and lesson plans


Comprises of:

- Introduction of the Growth and Changes book
- Recommended teaching methodology
- Two alternative lesson plans
- Section of Frequently Asked Questions

Teachers feedback very positive

- No suggestions for improvements
- Teachers found it useful to guide them through the lesson
- Highlighted unanimously that the girls enjoyed the lessons

Challenges highlighted by some teachers

- Limitations of what can be put in practice in absence of WASH facilities and pads
-  Extra hours/ efforts teachers need to put in this

MHM in the School WASH Guidelines

- among the rationale why improving SWASH is important
- one of the themes for hygiene education
- advocates for additional attention to this subject outside regular curriculum and outside the normal class setting
- highlights the need to also sensitize boys on the issue
- facilities for successful management that are promoted include:
 - emphasis on privacy of the latrines: lockable and girls and boys toilets separated
 - alternatives for disposal options and/ or washing spaces
- mainstreamed again in all 5 Toolkits

Truly made part and parcel of the package – but
..... translating theory into practice

Experience with incinerators

- Lots of shyness about using them; even about sharing one incinerator by students and teachers
- Some technical improvements can be made (e.g. attaching incinerator to toilet) but at the same time addressing social taboos
- Limited understanding on the use of the incinerator
- Limited use of incinerators
 - strong need to better understand *local* MHM practices and better briefings on the incinerators purpose
 - filling and clogging of toilets related to this?
- Combination of incineration of general garbage and sanitary pads (?)

Lesson learned: focus should be on finding *local* solutions for appropriate MHM without a pre-determined technical solution in mind – ***girls & female teachers to be consulted!***

Conclusions & Way Forward

- MHM remains a sensitive topic in which we make small steps forward
- Due to its sensitivity hard to get proper feedback
- MHM needs “hardware”, but changing attitudes most important hurdle
- Mainstreaming MHM in School WASH projects/ programmes requires safeguards to ensure it gets sufficient attention
- UNICEF will expand distribution of the Growth and Changes booklet to all girls (standards 5-7) in its 7 focus districts
- UNICEF will continue to advocate for country wide distribution
- G&C booklets will also be distributed through Tuseme (“Speak out!) Clubs that promote life skills among school girls
- Use of incinerators and changing rooms will be assessed to guide future hardware interventions
- Networking & sharing of information with likeminded organisations in Tanzania (e.g. CARE planning to make low-cost pads)

Thank you for listening!

For more information, please contact: avanagthoven@unicef.org



Illustration from the Tanzania School WASH Guideline:
Girls hygiene unit with water and disposal bin