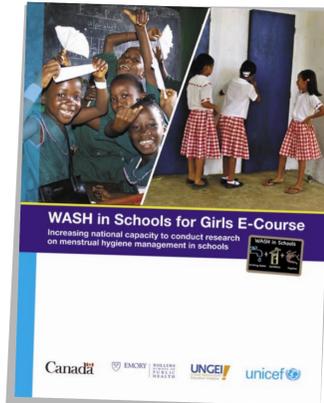


WinS4Girls E-Course: Increasing national capacity to conduct research on menstrual hygiene management in schools

Background

Menstrual hygiene remains a taboo in many settings, with poor knowledge and misconceptions as great a challenge as access to adequate facilities at both home and in school. In recent years, a solid body of evidence has revealed the discriminatory nature of many school environments, with menstruating girls unable to adequately manage their monthly menses with privacy, safety and dignity. This, in turn, may have negative impacts on girls' ability to succeed and thrive within the school environment.

In recognition of the positive impact on girls' education, initiatives around the world are addressing adolescent girls' menstrual hygiene management (MHM) needs in coordination with ongoing efforts to improve water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities and services in schools. By offering an alternative to the stigma and marginalization often associated with menstruation, integrating MHM into WASH in Schools (WinS) empowers all students, especially girls.



Objectives

The WinS4Girls E-Course was designed by the Center for Global Safe Water at Emory University and UNICEF. The objectives of the course were to:

- Expose participants to the different MHM practices and challenges facing girls in schools around the world, drawing on current research and initiatives.
- Highlight gender-sensitive approaches to research and programming.
- Promote shared learning and collaboration from various country-level stakeholders, including ministries of education.
- Strengthen the capacity of participants to undertake research on MHM in schools and to use research results to inform programmes, policy and advocacy.

Course delivery

- The course was delivered through 12 online modules from November 2014 to June 2015.
- Emory University instructors facilitated the course using the web conferencing software Adobe Connect.
- Each module included a PowerPoint presentation, with participants able to ask questions and provide feedback in real-time using a chat box.
- Emory instructors held regular online 'office hours' on weeks in which lectures were not scheduled to answer questions and provide feedback on in-country research.

Module	Assignment
Introduction to the WinS4Girls E-Course	Research local review board protocols
1: MHM and WASH in Schools	Conduct a desk review, Part 1
2: Incorporating gender into MHM research and programming	Conduct a desk review, Part 2
3: Research ethics	Brainstorm research ideas
4: Planning research	Map stakeholders
5: Qualitative and quantitative methods	Draft a research protocol
6: Tools for MHM research, Part 1	Draft objectives for research tools
7: Tools for MHM research, Part 2	Draft objective-driven research tools (in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with girls)
8: Collecting, recording and managing data	Draft objective-driven research tools (key informant interviews with teachers)
9: Training a research team, and piloting and executing research	Revise previous assignments
10: Integrating research into practice	Revise previous assignments
11: Qualitative data analysis	Revise previous assignments
12: Advocacy	Finalize research protocol and tools

Country working groups

- 82 participants from 14 countries (Afghanistan, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan and Zambia) successfully completed the course, including representatives from ministries of education, UNICEF country offices, local academia and implementing partners.
- Participants from each country formed a working group to collectively complete course assignments, which were designed to form the basis of the MHM research undertaken as part of the project.
- Emory instructors visited a number of countries to provide hands-on support during the planning and implementation of research.

Formative research

- With technical support from Emory University and UNICEF, working groups made up of course participants have been successful in planning and implementing formative research on MHM in schools in each of the 14 focus countries.
- The research results from each country provide a wealth of information on the MHM-related practices and barriers faced by schoolgirls in a range of contexts and will be used to develop a basic package of interventions on MHM in schools.

Milestones

Activity	Date
E-course completed	June 2015
Fourth MHM Virtual Conference	October 2015
Research projects completed	December 2015
Implementation of the basic package in all project locations	March 2016
Dissemination of knowledge products	June 2016
Project completed	October 2016

Course evaluation

Participants were asked to evaluate various aspects of the e-course on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest:

- Average rating of all modules: 4.6/5
- Average rating of "usefulness of assignments": 4.4/5
- Average rating of "readings": 4.5/5
- Average rating of "discussion board posts": 4.2/5
- Average rating of "quizzes": 4.7/5
- Average rating of "office hours": 4/5

Participant voices

"The materials incorporated in the course were outstanding. The inclusion of assignments, quizzes and the discussion forum helped us learn things effectively."

"The most useful aspect of the e-course was the webinars; the presentations were clear and were designed to encourage discussion among the group and with presenters."

"The course gave me a great opportunity to enhance my knowledge on MHM."

"The most useful aspect of the course was the guidance regarding how to undertake a qualitative research study on MHM, including the preparation of a research protocol, the development of instruments, the use of different methods, and applying research to practice."

Further adaptation

Emory University and UNICEF encourage other universities and organizations to adapt the course to reach practitioners in the field, either face-to-face or through distance learning. All course materials, including module presentations, research tools and background documents, can be accessed online at www.washinschoolsmapping.com.

For more information on the WinS4Girls E-Course and support in adapting it to your context, contact Bethany Caruso, bcarus@emory.edu, or Murat Sahin, msahin@unicef.org.

