Let’s Talk About It!

Safe and Equitable Learning Environments in Zambia

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Everyone agrees:
Educating girls is critical to development

The learning environment is often the biggest barrier to girls staying in school. The environment that best addresses girls’ needs in school includes

• Gender-friendly sanitation facilities at 50:1 ratio
• Access to MHM products and materials
• Teachers trained to talk about menstruation and provide support to girls
• Boys and male teachers involvement in MHM support
• MHM related activities (learning games, exhibitions etc)
Zambia realities:

- Girl to toilet ratio is over 200:1
- 32% of girls between grades 1 and 9 drop out from schools with NO toilet compared to 8% dropout in schools with toilets.
- Strong cultural taboos and silence around puberty and menstruation
- No official MHM school based programs

But Zambia also has existing framework:

- School Health and Nutrition (SHN) program with WASH as a pillar based in MoE
- Modeled on UNESCO FRESH Framework
- SHN coordinators in most schools
SPLASH* Zambia

- 4 year (2011-2015) School WASH program
- Funded by USAID, managed by FHI 360 and CARE
- Reaching 250,000 pupils with improved sanitation and hygiene, including strong focus on MHM
- Supports and builds upon SHN in the Ministry of Education

*Schools Promoting Learning Achievement through Sanitation and Hygiene
MHM in SPLASH

Starting point: girl-friendly latrines with washrooms

Then, advocacy and school and community activities
Mainstreaming MHM into the Zambia MoE

School level:

• Improved sanitation and washrooms for girls and female teachers
• Working with SHN Coordinators to start the conversation
• Workshops for teachers and district MOE officials
• Testing lessons, materials and activities
• Starting school-based reusable pad production
• Working with PTAs to provide pads
• Set up girls’ corner (with pads, TLC)
Girls show off their new MHM supplies

Boys get into sewing sanitary pads
Province level:

• In-service training programs for teachers, especially guidance counselors
• Official adoption of washrooms design
• Inclusion of MHM in provincial and district strategic and annual plans
• Inclusion of MH indicators in provincial school monitoring tool
• MHM Exhibition for local schools with stands and activities (pad production - both boys and girls)
• Use of a MHM logo and slogan (“Let’s Talk About It”)
• Development of teaching aids such as MHM Toolkit
• Development of MHM games for pupils and teachers
Menstrual Hygiene Management in Schools

Training Session

For School Officials and Teachers

USAID | ZAMBIA

Splash
Schools Promoting Learning Achievement through Sanitation and Hygiene
3. Menstrual Hygiene Management

a. Does the school have washrooms for girls?  □ Yes  □ No

b. Do washrooms have water?  □ Yes  □ No. Soap? □ Yes □ No

a. Do girls’ toilets have facilities for disposal of menstrual soiled sanitary towels?

   (check one) □ Yes □ No

a. What method of disposal of soiled sanitary towels exist in the school? (check one)

   □ Burying  □ Burning (incinerator) □ Other (Specify)

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a. Does the school provide sanitary towels for the girls? (check one) □ Yes □ No

a. Does the school offer Menstrual Hygiene Management education to the girls?

   (check records) □ Yes □ No

a. If yes above, how often is this done?

   □ Beginning of each term
   □ Once in a term
   □ Twice in a term
   □ Three times in a term
Useful documents and teaching aids on MHM

- Mini Toolkit for Teachers
- Pad pattern booklet
- In-service teacher training module
- Games and other classroom and WASH club resources
- The ABCs of MHM
Mini-Toolbox for all MHM trainees

• 2 pager overview of MHM
• Visual aids on menstruation physiology
• Session plan for training teachers or others on MHM
• Games with MHM theme
• MHM checklist for schools
• Puberty booklet for girls and others (planned)
• Guidelines and patterns for making pads at school or in the community
• Actual pad as example and basic sewing kit to get started
How to Make a Reusable Pad!
What Lessons so far?

• Silence and taboos can break down very fast if there is something positive offered

• Anecdotally, girls flock to schools with adequate sanitation and MHM programs

• MHM can and should be integrated into the existing school system through advocacy, training, materials, activities and events

• MHM can and should be included in school performance indicators and assessment tools
Thank you!