

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE WEBINAR 4 SYNOPSIS

Date: June 21st Thursday 1200h UTC

Topic: Infrastructure Solutions for Menstrual Hygiene

Guest Speakers:

Thematic presenter – Dr. Bella Monse (GIZ, Sector Programme Sustainable Sanitation, Germany)

Topical presenter – Hashim Khan (GIZ, Sanitation for Millions, Pakistan)

Topical presenter – Arundati Muralidharan (WaterAid, India)

Moderator – Thérèse Mahon, (WaterAid, UK)

Webinar host: GIZ and WaterAid

Organised by: WASH United, Simavi, World Vision, GIZ, an activity of the MH Alliance

Link to recording: <https://vimeo.com/276271838>

Thematic Presenter: Dr. Bella Monse (GIZ Sector Programme Sustainable Sanitation)

- “Schools as places for trendsetting” - MHM as part of Global WASH in Schools SDG Monitoring: Core Questions and Indicators
 - Published by WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for WASH (JMP) in the end of 2016, and is a binding concept for 193 countries
 - Core questions and indicators of the framework ought to be integrated into the respective national Educational Management Information System (EMIS)
- Service levels for MHM in schools based on JMP definitions
 - Basic service level is defined as the global SDG target and relate to MHM indirectly, advanced service levels are to be defined nationally and include direct indicators for MHM
 - Basic service level: gender-segregated and usable (accessible, functional, private) toilets and handwashing facilities with water and soap – indirectly related to MHM
 - Expanded service level: enhanced cubicles with covered bins/disposal mechanisms, lighting, emergency MHM material, access to information,
- Framework has been proven useful in the school setting and can be a model for mainstreaming concepts in other institutions (e.g. health care facilities, workplaces, prisons)

Topical Presenter: Hashim Khan (GIZ Sanitation for Millions, S4M)

- Specific **barriers** that girls face during their menstruation in schools
 - Cultural restriction and taboos
 - Inadequate WASH facilities, lack of access to affordable products, inappropriate disposal mechanisms
- Infrastructure and social attitudes changed: S4M’ **MHM rooms** and accompanying approaches to overcome taboos and silence around MHM in schools
 - Infrastructure measure with proper size and better lighting to facilitate MHM
 - Accompanied by MHM kits and WASH clubs where girls obtain information about menstruation through the story telling approach
- **Open issues:** Menstrual material disposal/reuse

The MH webinar series are organised by:



This event is organised as an activity under the MH Alliance
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- Landfill, incineration
- Washing material, drying before reuse

Topical Presenter: Arundati Muralidharan (WaterAid India)

- **Current and future challenges:** sanitary napkin waste load
 - 12 billion non-compostable pads per year which take 500-800 years to decompose; high waste volume, high environmental impact
 - Environmental challenge addressed by entrepreneurs: MH-products made of natural and compostable fibre (decomposition: 3-6 months); medium waste volume, medium-low environmental impact but also not many users due to low availability
 - movement toward reusable products; low waste volume and environmental impact, only few users in urban areas
- **Types of disposal:**
 - routine waste (especially in urban areas), thrown in the open, burial, open burning
 - government currently supports installing incinerators in schools
 - classification of menstrual waste: solid waste to be segregated from other domestic waste under responsibility of the whole waste chain (from waste generator via collector to treatment/recycling)
- **Treatment:**
 - sterilisation, autoclave, chemical treatment that segregates plastic
 - transform: compost, incinerate, recycle
 - incinerator technologies (including waste to energy incinerators), some of which entail environmental harms
- **Evidence, action and knowledge gaps**
 - O&M, cost and placement of incinerators (and ensure their safe usage also for illiterate population): safety, acceptability, effectiveness
 - Build awareness about menstrual waste disposal
 - Monitoring of waste disposal and roll-out of technologies

Resources on MHM

- Links provided by participants and presenters of the webinar
 - [Core Questions and Indicators for Monitoring WASH in Schools in the SDGs](#)
 - [South Asia regional review of MHM in schools](#) (with country snap-shots)

Key questions addressed in the webinar

- What does the S4M' MHM kit contain?
 - Pads, additional clothes (like a scarf) to hide stains or change, tea, information
- How can scale be achieved?
 - Only simple, low-cost solutions can be scaled up to as many schools as possible (instead of sophisticated interventions for few schools only); try to fulfil basic service level (i.e. lockable doors, covered bins in cubicle, access to water and soap) in a large numbers of schools.

- Step-wise approach: start with the simplest interventions, not addressing cost-intensive construction work in the first place but also access to information, for example.
- How is participation and ownership maintained (i.e. how far have girls and teachers been involved in the design of facilities) and taboos addressed while implementing infrastructure solutions? What is done for O&M?
 - There are no architectural specifications on how to universally design MHM facilities in schools (unlike for HCFs). In the building process of S4M' MHM rooms in Pakistan, parent-teacher committees were constantly consulted during negotiations with the Department of Education which also played a role to end with taboos
 - Mobile maintenance units are planned to be implemented to care for O&M, parents will be involved to ensure proper O&M; MHM kits are under responsibility of parents and school management
- What is done for better menstrual waste management and disposal?
 - Work with other sector partner to elaborate possible solutions and to see how to collectively engage with government bodies and development partners (to put menstrual waste management at the top of the agenda); work closer with several government ministries (Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation to include MH-waste into solid and liquid waste policy; set standards (in both disposal and production) by collaborating with central pollution control board
- What were the main insights from the Hackathon in India?
 - Much innovation on dealing with menstrual waste in terms of 1) incinerator technologies (e.g., solar powered), but very few with emission control measures; 2) chemical treatments to reduce waste volumes (how can chemical solutions help dissolve cellulosic layer; how can plastic waste be recycled); 3) shredding and separating a sanitary napkin, sterilising waste through UV treatment, and then recycle certain components - like make paver bricks; 4) reusable and compostable products as a waste reduction strategy.

Unanswered key question from the chat box/open issues

- MHM and (internal) displacement/emergencies
- MHM in public spaces (markets e.g.) and other institutions (such as prisons)
- MHM and marginalised groups (disabled people, trans- and non-binary students)
- MHM monitoring at household level
- Low-cost solutions for smaller WASH-projects/ improvements (in rural schools)
- Financing of both design of facilities and waste management