



The journey to the development of locally appropriate safe disposal systems for MHM facilities in schools of Sri Lanka: From open dumping to incineration

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Background



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- In Sri Lanka, less than half of adolescent girls have adequate knowledge about menstruation, including how it related to reproduction.
- Access to materials remains a challenge.
- Social support and restrictive social norms.

Objectives



- To study appropriateness of local design for safe disposal of sanitary napkins and provide recommendations for further improvements.
- To identify gaps, challenges, and opportunities in policy and programming particularly in schools.
- To recommend future strategies for scaling up and more comprehensive knowledge about MHM.



Main Stakeholders



- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Urban Development, Water Supply and Housing Facilities
- National Water Supply & Drainage Board
- UNICEF
- Central Environmental Authority
- Family Health Bureau

Research Method



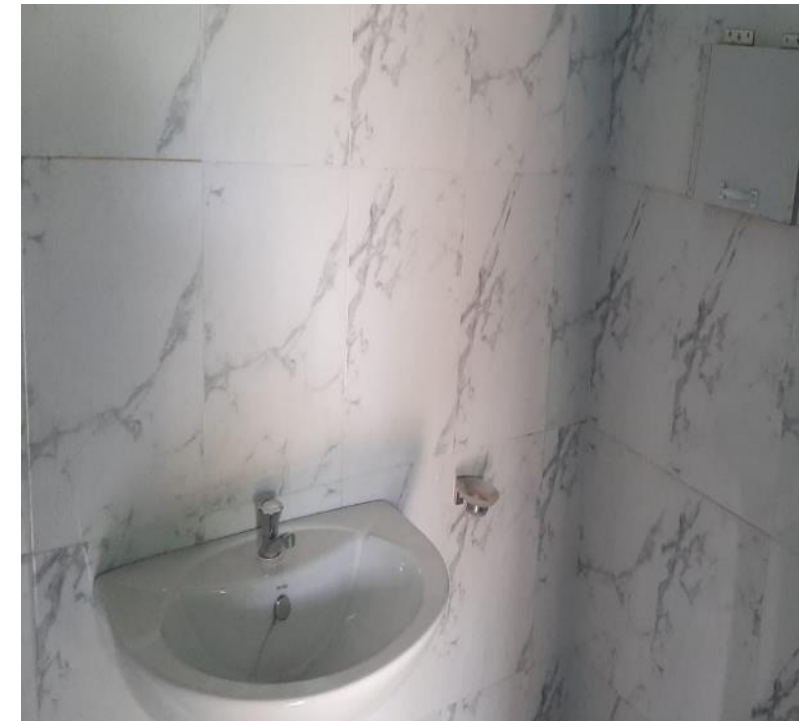
- Study local research, studies and project reports on MHM
- Study the existing designs developed for sanitary napkin disposal, considering:
 - Environment friendliness
 - Cultural appropriateness
 - User friendliness
 - Cost effectiveness
- Conduct interviews with sector partners and project implementing staff



Results



- Even the dry pit method is locally accepted
- Required secondary treatment options once the pit was filled
- Incinerators are more advanced and user friendly
- Need further improvements to minimize air pollution
- Multiple technical options are needed



Interior view of the incinerator



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Monitoring and evaluation approach



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- Involvement of users at the designing stage
- Development of feedback mechanism
- Regular Project Monitoring Visits
- Joint Monitoring



Outcomes



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- Support to scaling up of the MHM programme in schools at local level
- Implementation of MHM facilities at public and common places
- Promote women friendly space concept
- Development of appropriate local designs for safe disposal
- Decisions taken to develop a national guideline for MHM
- Formation of multi stakeholder technical working committee at national level

Challenges



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- Lack of comprehensive national strategy and programme for scaling up MHM
- Lack of coordination among multiple partners
- Lack of fund allocation for MHM promotion
- Lack of attention from decision makers and policy makers

Lessons learnt



- Evidence-based advocacy, development of compelling cases at ground level and sharing successes at national forums helped to draw the attention of decision makers and policy makers
- Inclusion of MHM in local policies strengthen the scaling up and fund allocation for MHM programmes
- Breaking silence is needed and men's involvement at every level boosts the MHM programming

Next steps



- Improve the design for quality improvements
- Improve the quality of MHM material
- Coordinate with universities for knowledge and technology transferring
- Development of comprehensive MHM guideline leading to a MHM policy

Recommendations for others



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- Create enabling environment for relevant discussions from user to policymaker
- Encourage locally appropriate and affordable technical solutions.
- Multi stakeholder collaboration is needed for scaling up
- Promote men's participation for MHM programmes at every level

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Thank You