

Guidance Note on MHM in Schools

This guidance note provides suggestions and checklists for facilities, materials, information, and management to enable ideal menstrual hygiene management in the Solomon Islands' schools.

The guidance provided is based on feedback from girls during focus group discussions and in-depth interviews in schools in Honaira and Guadalcanal Province in August 2014, as well as the synthesis publication *Menstrual Hygiene Matters: A resource for improving menstrual hygiene around the world* (House, Mahon, and Cavill, 2012).

The guidance prioritizes no- or low-cost measures that are possible for schools to meet without additional budget allocation, though they may require greater input of student, staff, or administrator time for management and education.

Checklist for building school capacity in MHM

Action	Resources for Solomon Islands
A baseline assessment of school WASH has been undertaken to identify how girls and female teachers manage their menstruation at school, the challenges they face, and their priorities for improvements.	- MHM in Schools survey tools and training materials - Report on Honiara and Guadalcanal
Schools have accessible and gender-segregated WASH facilities providing a private and hygienic environment for girls and female teachers to manage their menstruation.	- Guiding design principles - Facilities checklist - <i>Forthcoming standard designs by MHMS and MEHRD</i>
School WASH facilities are well maintained.	- Management checklist
Teachers and staff are trained and confident to talk about menstrual hygiene with students and can provide good advice.	- <i>Forthcoming by MHMS and partners</i>
Schools allocate funds for hygiene materials including soap, toilet paper, and sanitary pads.	- Materials checklist
Schools provide educational opportunities for girls and boys to learn about adolescence and menstrual hygiene in the curriculum and through provision of materials.	- <i>Forthcoming by MHMS and partners</i>
Schools have a discreet disposal mechanism for sanitary protection materials.	- Facilities checklist
Schools monitor and inspect for menstrual hygiene in facilities.	- Monitoring survey
School boards commit to improving and regularly discuss menstrual hygiene in their meetings.	- Management checklist

Guiding Design Principles

Girls in secondary schools in Honaira and Guadalcanal Province consistently repeated the principles of separation, privacy, security, and convenience in facilities design and location within their day and boarding schools.

While retrofitting all schools with existing facilities to be in line with these principles is not possible in the near-term and would have considerable funding requirements, these principles can easily be applied as new facilities are built or renovated.

Separation

- Separate toilets are available for boys and girls, as well as male and female teachers.
- Girls' toilets are located in a separate building from boys' toilets and from classrooms.
- When possible, girls' toilets are located far from the boys' toilet block.
- When possible, girls' toilets are located far from the classroom building.
- If the school contains primary and secondary school students, primary and secondary toilets are separate, or class numbers assigned for each stall, with separate waste disposal so that young girls do not come in contact with older girls' used sanitary materials.

Privacy

- Toilet location and positioning of the entrance door allows for discreet entrance and exit by girls on school grounds. This may be accomplished through siting of the facilities or use of a privacy wall.
- Toilets have doors with locks.
- Entrance doors to the toilet block can be closed or otherwise use a privacy wall to prevent others from looking inside.
- Windows are positioned at a height and location that does not allow others to look inside.
- In boarding schools, private bathing facilities are available.
- In boarding schools, private changing facilities are available, either as larger toilet stalls or as separate facilities.

Security

- At day schools, adequate light is available inside the toilet block and stalls for use and cleaning.
- At boarding schools, light is available in all toilet and washing facilities 24 hours a day.
- In urban or busy locations, outsiders are prevented from entering school grounds and using toilets by a fence or supervision.

Convenience

- Toilets are unlocked (from the outside) and accessible throughout the school day.
- In boarding schools, girls' ablution blocks are located close to or adjoining the girls' dormitory.

- In day schools, the privacy was prioritized over convenience and girls expressed a preference for walking longer to the toilet if it provided greater discretion and separation from boys.

Facilities Checklist

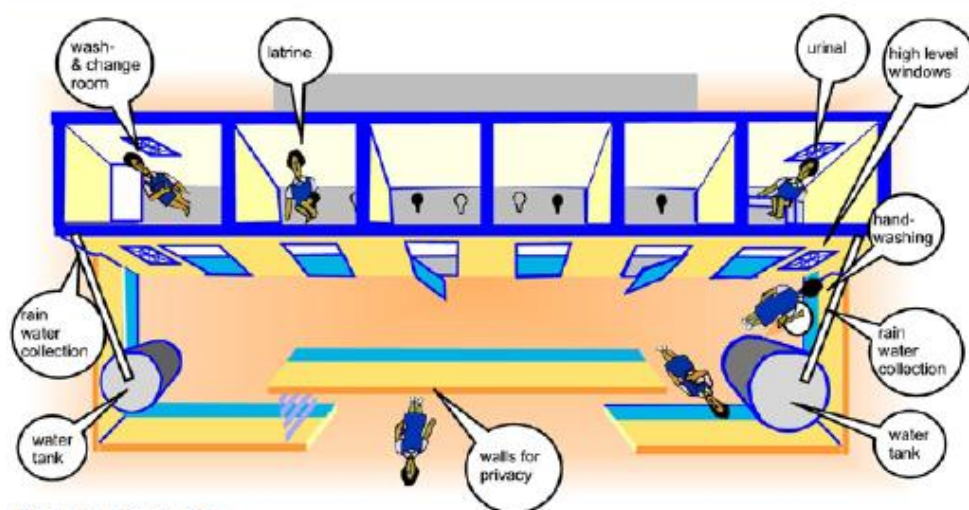
Girls and their teachers in Honiara and Guadalcanal expressed preferences for resources and facilities that will help girls practice good hygiene at school. Photos or designs from around the world that meet these requirements are shown as examples.

Water

At every school, girls' highest priority was reliable water supply to meet their hygiene needs. Girls and teachers need water to wash their hands, bodies, and clothing, and to clean facilities.

- Constant source of clean water available at school.
- Back-up source in place in case primary source fails.
- Water is available inside girls' ablution blocks.
- Water is available inside girls' toilet compartments and bathing units, either from a tap or from a bucket that can be filled nearby.
- Running water is available at handwashing facilities (see Handwashing below).

Water must be available inside girls' ablution blocks.



Picture: Jaap Zomerplaag

Source: House, Mahon and Cavill (2012) originally from Roberts 2007

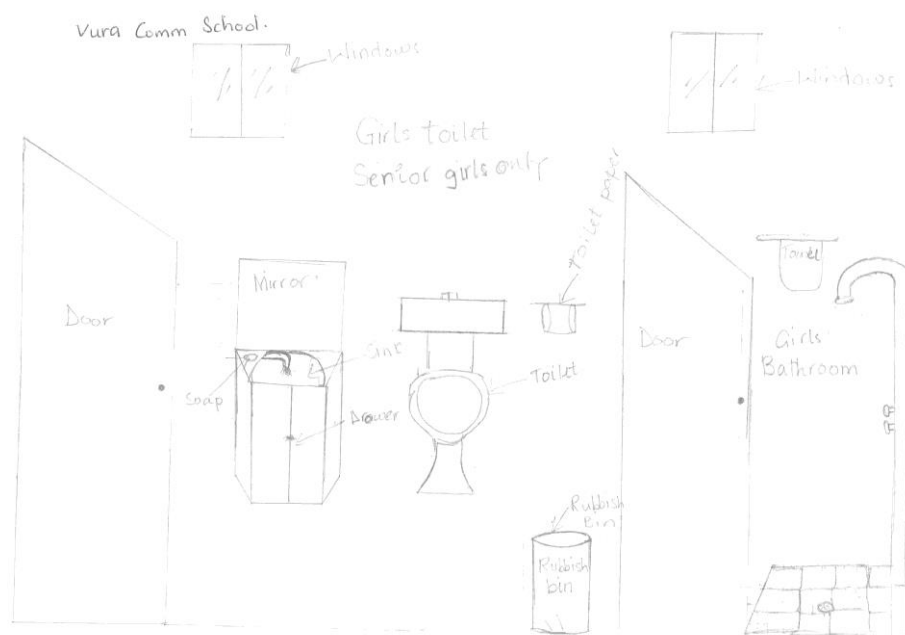
This example from Ghana shows rainwater available within the ablution block, which could be used as a primary or secondary source depending on water availability at the school. Taps available for handwashing and filling buckets to carry into the toilet or changing stalls. Note female urinals would not be appropriate for Solomon Islands.

Toilets

- If flush or pour-flush toilets are used, water is available at all times for flushing.
- If water supply is inconsistent, dry toilet options are used or available as a back-up system.
- Water is available inside girls' toilet stalls, either from a tap or from a bucket that can be filled nearby. Where feasible, sinks are available inside toilet stalls.

- Stalls are appropriately sized for girls to change their clothing if no separate changing rooms are provided.
- Individual stalls can be locked from the inside.
- Toilets are light and can be easily cleaned.
- Rubbish bins are available inside toilet stalls (see **Rubbish** below).
- Toilet stalls have storage available, either in the form of wall or door hooks, cubby holes, cabinets, or locker (see **Storage** below).
- Where preferred by students, stalls are allocated to certain classes.

The 'ideal latrine' drawn by a day student in Honiara shows a private toilet stall allocated to senior girls with water available at a sink, a rubbish bin near the toilet for discreet disposal, and storage available in a cabinet. The drawing shows soap and toilet paper available, as well as a mirror for checking for stains.



Drawing by girls in Honiara

Handwashing

- Facilities are available with running water for handwashing inside or adjacent to girls' toilets.
- Soap is available for handwashing.
- Sinks or taps provide space for filling buckets and carrying into toilet stalls or changing rooms if water is not consistently available in either place.
- Facilities drain to an appropriate location.

Handwashing facilities can be low-cost and locally constructed such as the tippy-taps shown below.



Tip the bottle and pour water into the handle. When the bottle is released water will slowly empty from a hole in the handle. The can is used to protect the soap from the rain.



The Tippy-tap approach, shown right, was developed in sub-Saharan Africa where access to water is limited. In this case, each child provides his or her own water bottle for handwashing. Tied on both ends by a string, the water bottle becomes a miniature reservoir that gives continued flow of water once tipped to its flowing end. To be efficient, the drip hole must be big enough relative to the volume of the container. This is a simple, low-cost technology but a highly effective self-contained approach.

Sources: UNICEF 2012, GIZ Fit for School 2014

Permanent handwashing facilities are possible with higher investment and should be sized appropriately for children. The facilities shown below were constructed for group handwashing before meals but could be adapted for use in or near student ablution blocks.



The photo on the left shows the ideal self-contained system where a bucket is elevated. The bucket has been fitted with an inclined pipe attached to the bottom. In this case from Lao PDR, there is also a pipe that is connected to the water mains. This is a dual system, which can use the main water system if and when it is working. It can also be manually refilled.

Source: GIZ Fit for School 2014

See GIZ Fit for School 2014 for further guidance on student handwashing facilities, including how to avoid common mistakes in design and construction.

Bathing facilities

- At boarding schools, individually private bathing facilities such as a shower or room with a tap and a bucket is available for girls at all times at the ratios specified in the minimum standards.
- At day schools, a shower or tap with bucket is available for washing during the day.
- Showers or bathing rooms drain to a discreet location that avoids standing water in the bathing areas and allows for easy cleaning.
- Bathing facilities include storage for towels and clothing (see **Storage** below).

This shower, located in the end stall of a girls' ablution block at a day school in Honiara, would provide private washing ability to girls' if water were available.

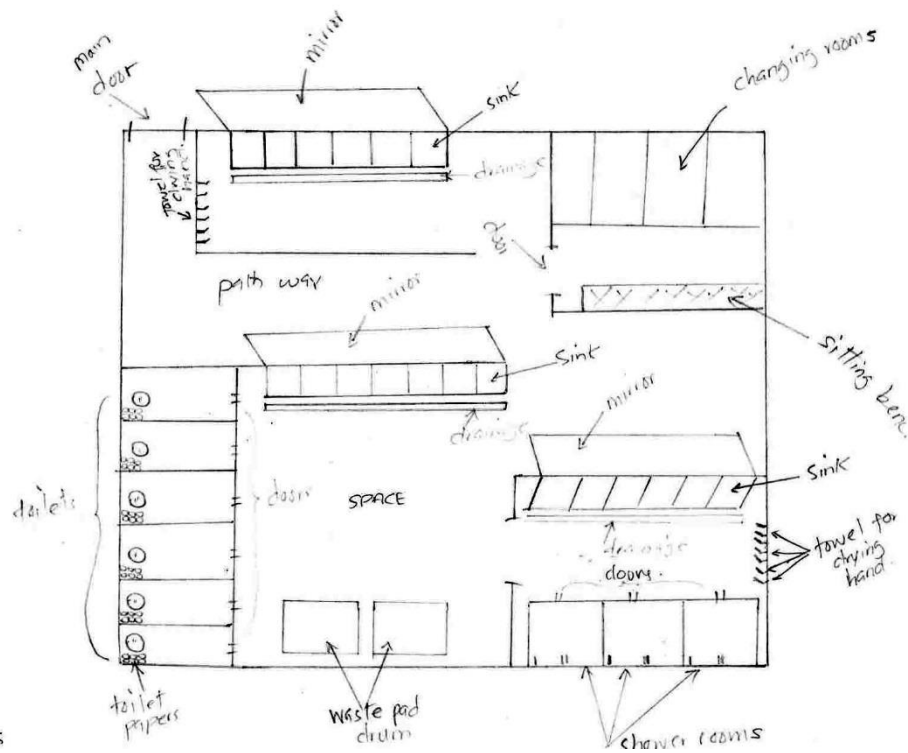


Photos © UNICEF Pacific / Yamakoshi

Changing rooms

- At day schools, adequate space is available for girls to change their clothing if necessary. This could be accomplished through sizing toilet stalls slightly larger so that girls can use them for changing, or by providing a separate changing room.
- At boarding schools, changing rooms with benches and/or storage are available for private changing of sanitary materials and clothing outside of the dormitory. Changing rooms could also be combined into extended bathing or toilet compartments.
- Rubbish bins are available inside the changing rooms (see **Rubbish** below).

Girls at a boarding school in Guadalcanal prefer private changing rooms with a bench area for sitting and putting clothing or towels.

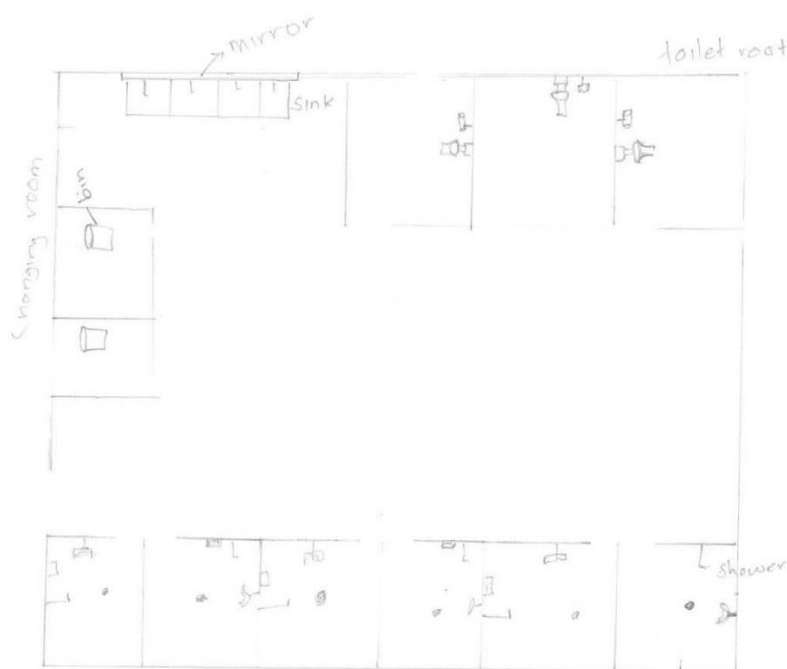


Drawing by girls in Guadalcanal

Mirrors

- A wall mirror or small hand mirror is available in the latrine to help girls check for stains and ensure that clothing is in order prior to returning to class.

This drawing from a girl at a boarding school in Guadalcanal shows mirrors where girls can check their clothing and appearance after bathing, changing, or using the toilet.

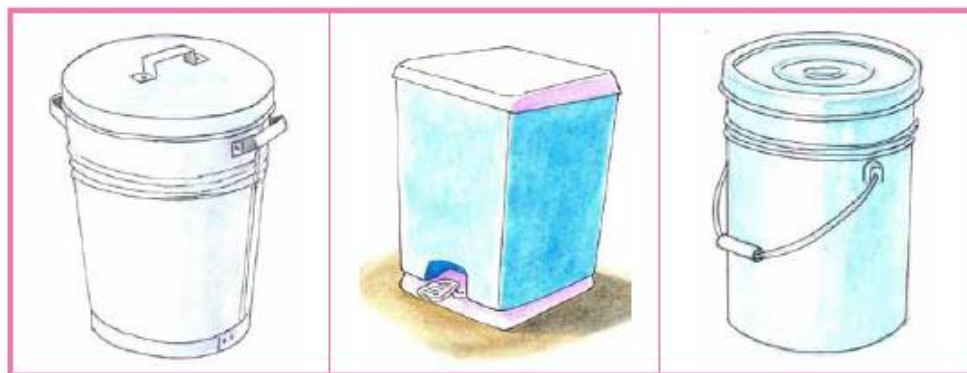


Drawing by girls in Guadalcanal

Rubbish

- Materials for wrapping used pads prior to disposal are available.
- Rubbish bins are available inside of toilet stalls for maximum privacy. Bins should be washable and include a close-fitting lid for privacy and to avoid attracting vermin.
- If not provided within toilet stalls and where accepted by girls, a common rubbish bin is available inside the girls' ablution block.
- Bins are hygienically and regularly emptied to a managed location for burning. Gloves and other protective equipment is used by those tasked with emptying it.
- An incinerator is available for burning menstrual items. Incinerator is easy and safe to operate, safe to access, close to girls' facilities, and can operate with a minimum amount of fuel reaching an adequate temperature for burning materials.

A range of choices is available for rubbish bins in school toilets, including low-cost plastic buckets with lids as are widely available in the Solomon Islands.

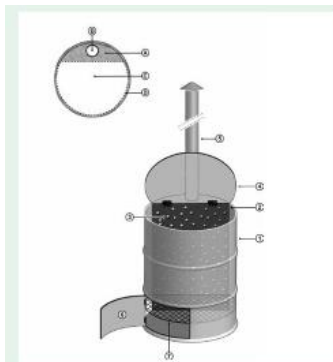


Source: House, Mahon and Cavill (2012) originally Government of Tanzania

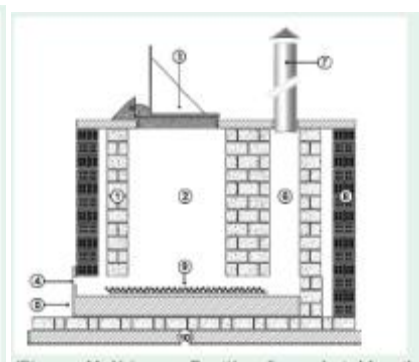
School management indicated their preference for incinerators. Further investigations into appropriate and well-functioning incinerators at schools in the Solomon Islands are needed, and whether the incinerator should be integrated into the design of a girls' ablution block or provided separately. Betikama School reportedly has an incinerator that functions well and could provide an example.



(Photo: Geodata, Tanzania)



(Diagram: Médecins sans Frontières)



(Diagram: Médecins sans Frontières, figure adapted from the De Montfort incinerator)

Source: House, Mahon and Cavill (2012) from Geodata Tanzania and MSF.

Ventilation

- Windows or louvres provide airflow to control temperature and odor.
- Location, height, and/or orientation of windows prevents others from 'peeping' inside.

Storage

- At boarding schools, bathing and changing rooms must provide storage.
- In day schools, a minimum of hooks and shelves should be provided in toilet stalls.
- In toilet, bathing, and changing compartments, hooks are available on the wall for hanging towels, clothing, and bags.
- Cubby holes, shelves, lockers, or cabinets are available for temporary or permanent storage of towels, clothing, sanitary pads or cloths, underwear, soap, tissues, or other materials.



Laundry

- At day schools, sinks or taps allow girls to safely clean used cloths or stained clothing.
- At boarding schools, girls and boys have separate laundry facilities adjoining or near dormitories or ablution blocks.
- At boarding schools, deep sinks, buckets, or basins are provided for washing clothing. If applicable, taps or sinks are deep enough to enable filling of buckets.
- At boarding schools, students have an area for scrubbing clothing such as a concrete bench.
- A light, airy place is available for girls to fully dry cloths or clothing.

These girls' laundry facilities at a boarding school in Guadalcanal are a good design example for other schools, though maintenance issues such as drainage and access to water supply must be addressed.

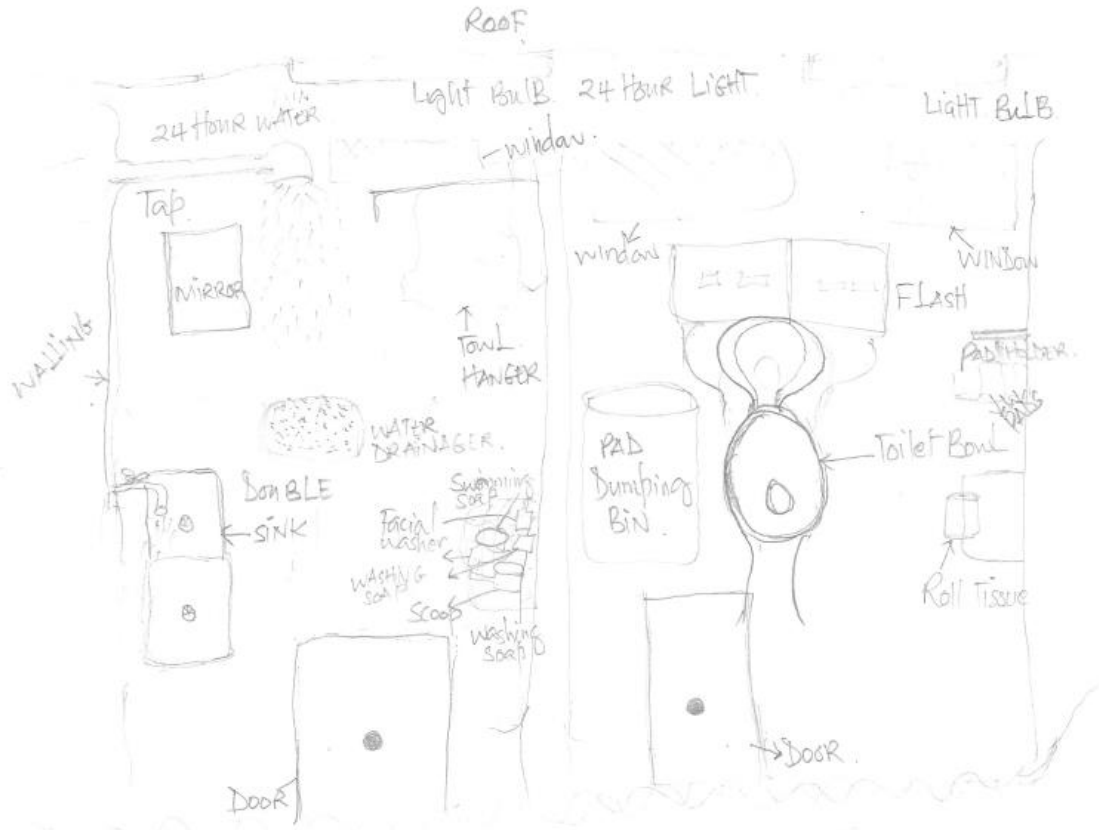


Photos © UNICEF Pacific / Yamakoshi

Light

- Latrines provide sufficient light for use and cleaning regardless of weather or electricity.
- At boarding schools, ablution blocks provide light at night to ensure safety.

This drawing from a boarding school in Guadalcanal shows the importance of having light available 24 hours, including both windows and light bulbs.



Drawing by girls in Guadalcanal

Materials Checklist

Toilet paper

- Toilet paper or other appropriate anal cleansing material is available for students inside the toilet stall.
- At boarding schools, students are issued a sufficient amount of toilet paper on a weekly or monthly basis to meet their needs.

Sanitary pads

- Sanitary pads, either disposable or cloth, are available for girls free of charge with a female teacher or staff member in an emergency
- Sanitary pads are always available for sale at an affordable price on or near school grounds.
- The potential for sanitary pad vending machines in school bathrooms is explored.

Soap for washing hands and body

- Handwashing soap is always available at sinks, taps, buckets, or other handwashing facilities.
- At boarding schools, students are issued soap for personal hygiene on a monthly basis with toilet paper.
- At boarding schools, soap is available for sale at school canteens.

Laundry

- At day schools, assistance is provided to girls who stain their uniform skirts. One suggested model is for schools to provide an extra uniform skirt to check out from a teacher and change into to avoid absenteeism. The girl would then be responsible to clean the extra skirt and check it back in the next day.
- At day schools, handwashing facilities also allow for discreet (i.e., in ablution blocks) washing of cloths and laundry soap is available from a teacher or staff member.
- At boarding schools, students are supported to ensure access to buckets, scrub brushes, and laundry soap.

Cleaning supplies

- Cleaning supplies are available for students, teachers, and paid cleaners.
- Cleaning supplies may include brooms, dustpans, plastic bags, cleaning detergents, rags, mops, buckets, and scrub brushes.

Management Checklist

Committing school management

- School boards commit to improving and regularly discuss menstrual hygiene in their meetings.
- School boards and principals commit resources to school WASH facilities, materials, and teacher training.
- School boards and Parent-Teacher Associations monitor school WASH facilities with particular attention to girls' needs as part of normal school performance monitoring.

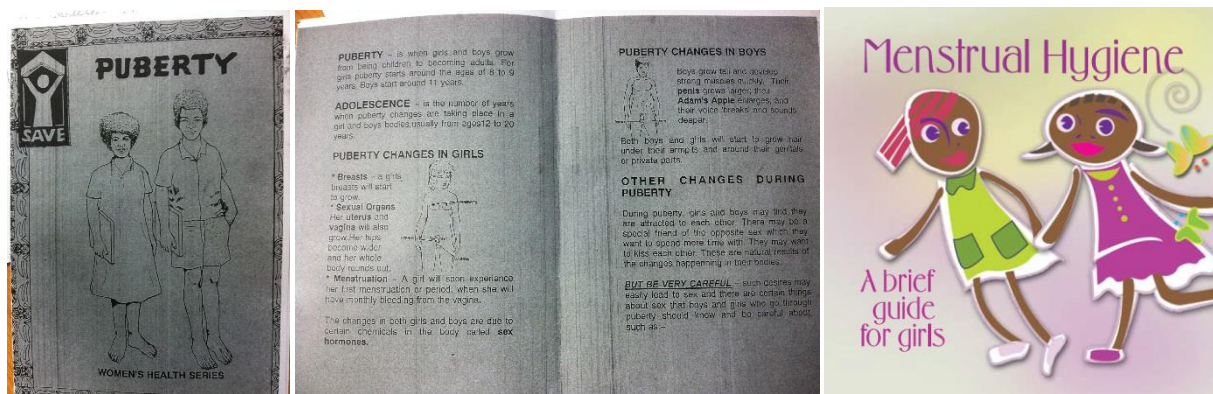
Supporting girls

- Teachers and staff are trained and confident to talk about menstrual hygiene with students and can provide good advice.
- A female teacher, staff member, or student such as the girls' senior prefect is appointed as the MHM focal point in the school to assist students who have problems, questions, or need materials when menstruating.
- Girls are aware of the MHM focal point and are comfortable approaching her.
- Girls are not punished for visiting the toilet or taking extra time to wash when they are menstruating. This is facilitated through the focal point.

Educating students and promoting hygiene *(additional information forthcoming by MHMS)*

- Schools provide educational opportunities for girls and boys to learn about adolescence and menstrual hygiene in the curriculum, in separate classes or sessions if required.
- Information is available for girls to read about puberty and reproductive health, including menstruation.
- Girls are made aware of proper use, cleaning, handling, and disposal of disposable and cloth pads. Girls know how to prevent spreading germs when handling menstrual blood.
- Handwashing is promoted by introducing supervised handwashing times at school for all students.
- Partnerships are sought with MHMS and NGOs to supplement curricular education with special sessions as teachers and students often take these sessions more seriously.

The Ministry of Health and Medical Services reproductive and adolescent health programme would like to update their educational materials on puberty to increase relevance and focus specifically on menstrual hygiene management. In the absence of their own materials, MHMS chose to use the booklet developed for girls in Sierra Leone to provide information during school surveys.



Sources: Photos of Puberty: Women's health series by Save the Children Australia (undated) by UNICEF Pacific / Yamakoshi; Menstrual Hygiene: A brief guide for girls (undated) by Government of Sierra Leone and UNICEF.

Cleaning ablution blocks

- Students have daily duty rosters for cleaning girls' and boys' ablution blocks that are arranged and overseen either by a teacher or staff person or the prefects.
- Cleaning responsibilities are gender-neutral, while girls are responsible for managing their own waste chain.
- Cleaning supplies are provided by the school.

Managing solid waste

- Girls are encouraged to take personal responsibility for safe disposal of their used menstrual hygiene materials within the girls' ablution block, out of respect to their peers.
- Gloves and other protective equipment is used by those tasked with emptying rubbish bins.
- Fuel is available for operating the incinerator, if waste is not self-burning.

Providing materials

- Schools allocated budget and ensure a continual supply of toilet paper, soap, and pads for emergency use. These materials are made available to students without unnecessary barriers.
- Where girls use disposable pads, they are available for sale in the school canteen. Single pads are sold to increase affordability.
- Female staff or students staff canteens, if appropriate, to ensure that girls are not embarrassed when buying pads. If not possible, then a female is designated as responsible to manage and sell the stock of disposable pads.
- At boarding schools where students prefer disposable pads, female students over 10 years of age are issued pads on a monthly basis with toilet paper and other hygiene materials.
- If desired, girls are taught how to make their own reusable sanitary pads in home economics.

Jac Torres Gomez of the Crimson Movement and Joanna Brislane of IWDA trialed the 'purse pad' in the Solomon Islands and PNG, with a following in PNG. This could be further explored for Solomon Islands.

For each PURSE PAD you will need

FABRICS

TOP LAYER fabrics will be seen when the pad is finished.

Good top layer fabrics include:

- Second hand cotton clothes
- Colourful towels/t-shirts/shorts

INNER LAYER fabrics will be hidden when the pad is finished. You can add or remove the inner layers to change the thickness of the pad.

Good inner layer fabrics are absorbent:

- Old towels
- Dressing gowns
- Pieces

BOTTOM LAYER fabrics will be seen when the pad is finished. They stop leakage and stains.

Bottom layer fabrics must be water resistant:

- Boat shorts
- Old umbrella skins
- Rain jackets

SEWING INSTRUCTIONS
You can use a sewing machine or stitch by hand.

- 1 Cut out your pattern pieces as shown.
- 2 Put together the inner layers by stitching them on top of each other, with the smaller pieces inside the bigger pieces.
The number of layers will depend on how thick/absorbent your pad will be. Loosely attach the pieces together to hold them in place.
- 3 On top of these pieces, lay the piece A cut from the inner fabric, with the correct side facing up.
- 4 Sew a 1-2cm seam around the edge of all the pieces, leaving a small gap at the short end.
Trim the ends. Turn the piece outside in as the inner layers are hidden inside. Stitch the gap closed.
- 5 Sew a neat line of stitching around the outside of the pad, through every layer (except the inner wings).
- 6 Lay the wings' pattern piece D on top of each other, with the correct sides facing inside.
Sew a 1-2cm seam around the outside, leaving a small gap on the straight side. Turn the piece outside in. Stitch the gap closed.
- 7 Sew a neat line of stitching around the outside of the wings (except if hand sewn).
- 8 Pin the two pieces together. The top layer of the pad should be facing in.
Attach the wings to the pad by sewing two evenly spaced lines through all of the layers of fabric, about 2-3cm from the edge of the pad. This makes a stitch that directs the flow from away from the edges of the pad.
- 9 Sew a neat line of stitching around the outside of the pad, through every layer (except the inner wings).

THE PURSE PAD

Getting your period is a natural and normal part of being a woman. There are many options for managing your period, including reusable and disposable sanitary pads and tampons - whatever your choice, getting your period doesn't have to keep you at home or make you feel embarrassed.

You can follow these simple instructions to make your own reusable sanitary pads from recycled materials. These pads look good and are comfortable to wear! Changing them is simple - just fold the pad up and clip shut until you are ready to wash it. These pads can be easily washed and used again.

Feel positive and in control of your periods with the Purse Pad!

PURSE PADS HAVE MANY BENEFITS

- They save you time because they are easy to wash and dry.
- They save you money because they are made from recycled materials and can be reused for up to two years.
- They can be washed and dried in the privacy of your own home.
- They are better for the environment because they don't end up as rubbish or in our oceans and rivers.
- They are safe, hygienic and clean because there are no chemicals used to produce them.
- They are more effective and comfortable than other options like toilet paper, scorpers, nap or reuse.

WASHING YOUR PURSE PAD

- Always use cool water. Never use hot water to wash your pads.
- If possible, wash your pads immediately after use. If your pads have dried, try soaking them in a bucket of cool water before washing them.
- Using bi-carbonate soda (used in baking) can help remove stains.
- Use soap or detergent only if necessary, as it can irritate sensitive skin.
- Lay the pads flat and put them somewhere outside to dry.
- Drying pads in the sun will help remove stains and keep them germ free.
- Make sure your pads are clean and dry before you use them again.
- Do not iron the pads as you may melt the bottom layer fabric.
- Do not use bleach or fabric softener when washing your pads.

The Purse Pad is developed with the support of UNICEF Solomon Islands.

www.crimsoncampaign.org

Source: The Crimson Campaign, as recently featured in Stella Magazine (PNG).

Monitoring and repairing facilities

- Prefects monitor functioning and cleanliness of facilities on a regular basis and any problems are reported to the facilities manager, principal, and/or school board, depending on the situation.
- Timely maintenance is provided for broken or missing toilets, sinks, taps, drainage, showers, lights, windows, rubbish bins, or incinerators. Girls repeatedly said that lack of regular repair discourages cleaning and use.

References and Resources

Emory University and UNICEF (2013). Tools for assessing menstrual hygiene management in schools. UNICEF, New York, USA. Available online at www.unicef.org/wash/schools.

GIZ Fit for School (2014). Field Guide: Hardware for Group Handwashing in Schools (Second Edition). Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Manila, Philippines.

House, S., T. Mahon and S. Cavill (2012). Menstrual hygiene matters: A resource for improving menstrual hygiene around the world. WaterAid: London.

Reed, R.A., and Shaw R.J. (2008). Sanitation for Primary Schools in Africa. WEDC, Loughborough University, UK.

Roberts L (2007). Girl friendly latrines for Ghanaian schoolgirls; WASH in schools, *Notes and News*. IRC, the Netherlands.

UNICEF (no date) Menstrual hygiene: A brief guide for girls. UNICEF, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

UNICEF (2006). WASH in Schools module of the Child-Friendly Schools Manual. UNICEF, New York, USA.

UNICEF EAPRO (2010). WASH in schools monitoring package: The survey module. UNICEF, New York, USA.

UNICEF (2012). Compendium of WASH in Schools Facilities in Emergencies. UNICEF, New York, USA. Available online at www.unicef.org/wash/schools.