

Galvanizing Action on Menstrual Health in Asia and the Pacific

Menstrual Hygiene Day

28 May 2020

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Purpose

1. Demonstrate the importance of multi-sectoral approaches to menstrual health in the Pacific.
2. Showcase examples of menstrual health programming in action in the Pacific, and make the case for increased focus.

Pacific Menstrual Health Network



#mhday2020 #pacificperiods



Increasing momentum...



2012 **Columbia University & UNICEF** co-host the 1st MHM in Schools Conference

2014 **WASH United** launches Global Menstrual Hygiene Day

2016 - 17 **Last Taboo** research (DFAT) across 3 Pacific countries

2018 **UNFPA** hosts 1st Regional Conference on MH Africa

2019 **Global MHH Collective** is established

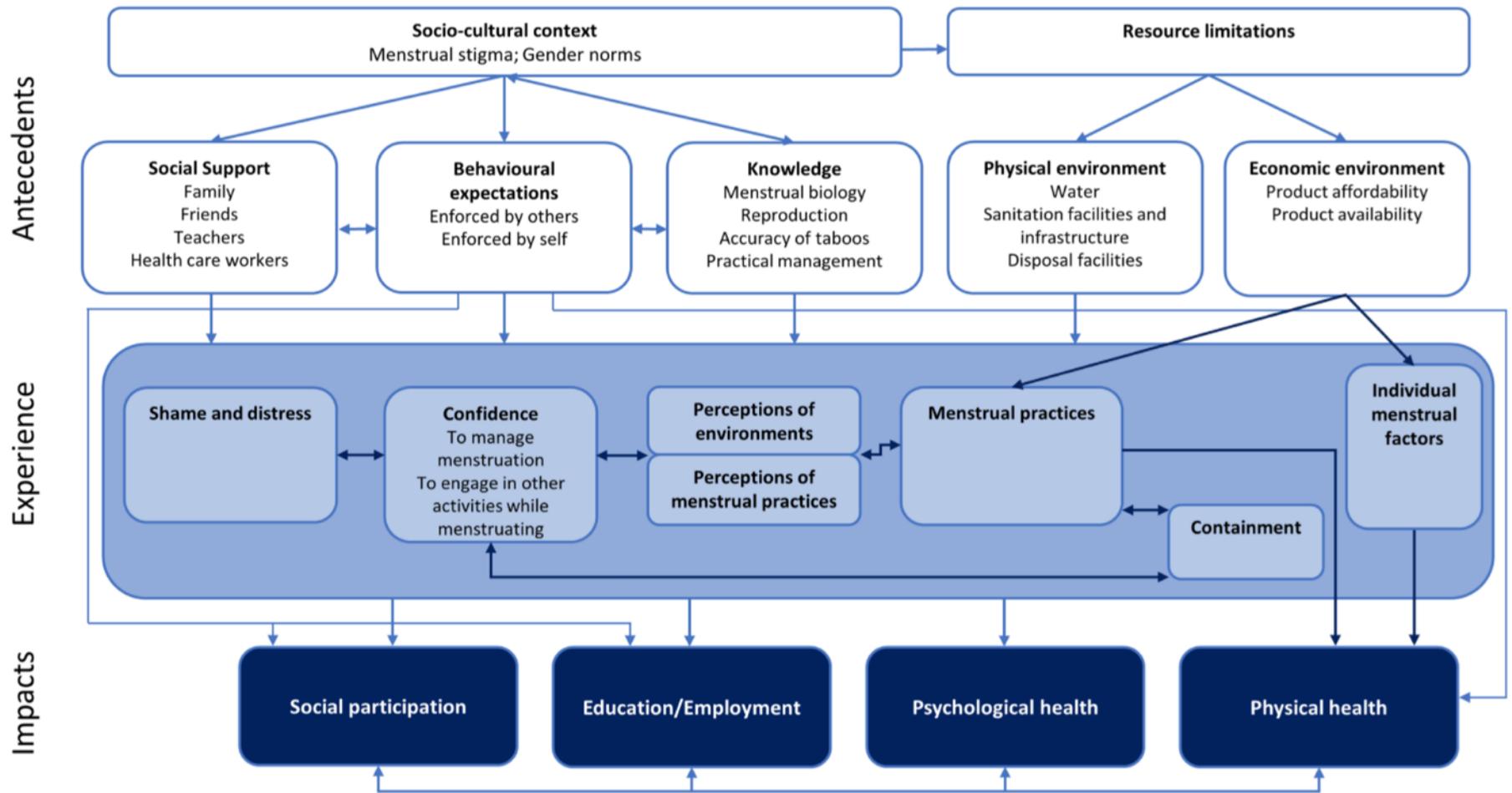
2013 **WaterAid & partners** publish the first comprehensive MHM Guide

2015 Deemed the "Year of the Period" *#PeriodsAreNotAnInsult*

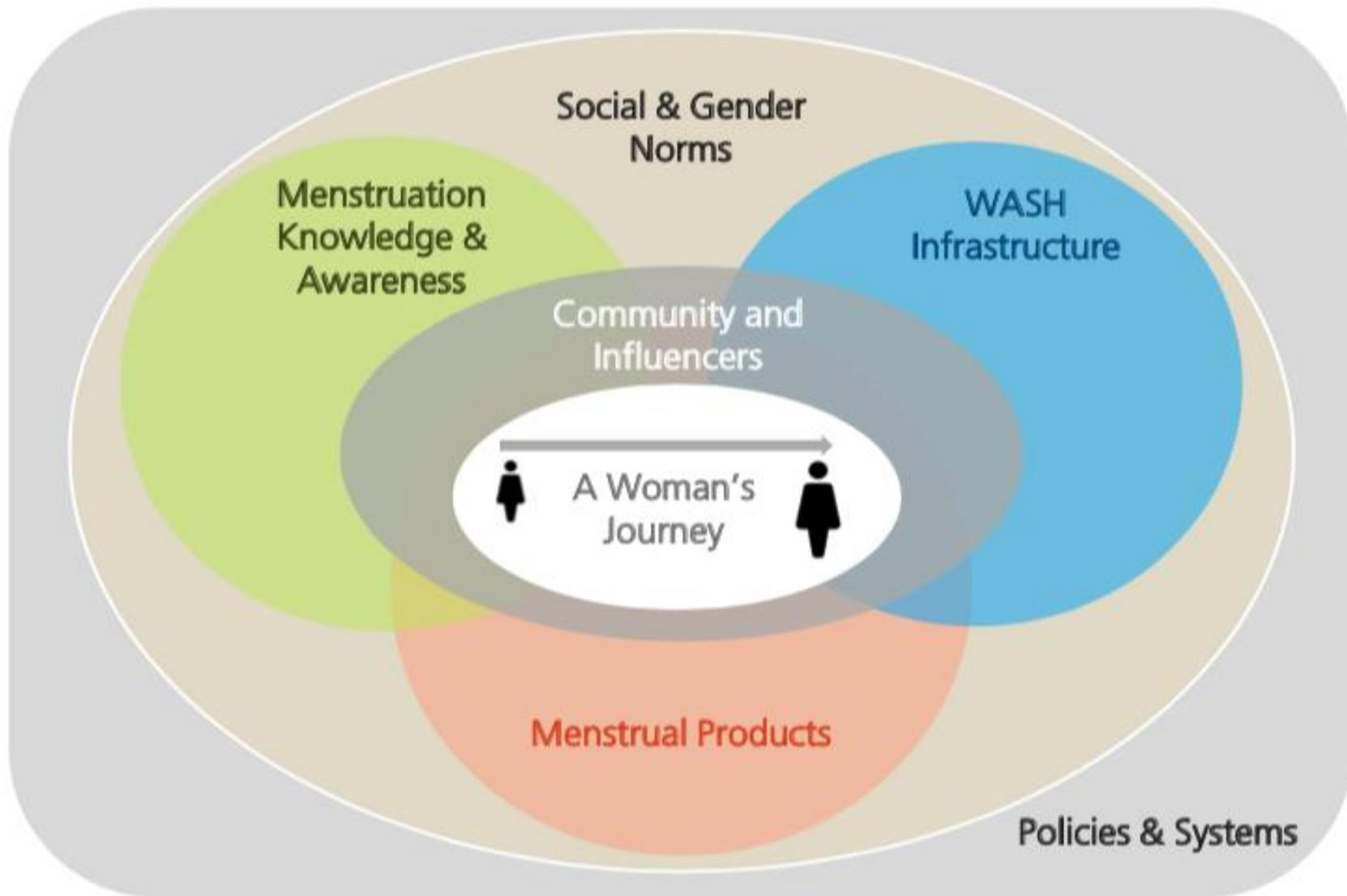
2018 **Menstrual Health Ecosystem** Opportunities scoping/ workshop (DFAT, Criterion Institute)

2019-20 **Financing model for reusable products under development** Pacific RISE initiative





Hennegan J, Shannon AK, Rubli J, Schwab KJ, Melendez-Torres GJ (2019) Women's and girls' experiences of menstruation in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review and qualitative metasynthesis. *PLoS Med* 16(5): e1002803.



Keeping Girls in School through Improved Reproductive and Menstrual Health



Implemented in **Timor-Leste** and **Papua New Guinea**: 2017-2020

Funded through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program's Gender Action Platform (GAP)

- The project aims to:
 1. Increase uptake and awareness of SRH services and MH practices
 2. Improve accessibility of menstrual products
 3. Strengthen knowledge and attention to MHH regionally

Key Project Results

40,044 girls, boys, and adults with improved awareness of **SRHR**, and **MH practices**

8,239 women and girls using their choice of contraception.

1,710 students accessing MH-friendly WASH facilities at school.

Over 1,400 locally produced, reusable MH materials sold through supply chain development activities

Community of practice on integrated approaches to MH in Asia Pacific established to improve awareness of SRH/FP and MH amongst key stakeholders and decisionmakers regionally



Today's Speakers

- 1. Silvina Amaral Mendoca:** Adolescent Reproductive Health Educator at Marie Stopes Timor-Leste
- 2. Lua Rikis:** Program Officer, WaterAid Papua New Guinea
- 3. Mary Elizabeth Ramosea:** Founder of Kaleko Steifree, The Solomon Islands
- 4. Naomi Navoce:** Program Officer (Interim Gender), Pacific Disability Forum

Integrated Menstrual Health Programming in Asia and the Pacific

Silvina Amaral and Lua Rikis

Some thoughts from girls in Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea



“I knew that I would have a period every month, but I didn't know that it meant that you could get pregnant.”

17-year-old mother from Liquisa, Timor-Leste

“Before it was difficult to change our pads in the old toilets, so we used to go to the toilets by the sea because it is more private.”

15-year-old student in Central Province, Papua New Guinea

Project Activities



- Activities in Timor-Leste:
 - Education in schools
 - Youth Corners & Hotline through the MSTL program
 - SRH service provision
 - WASH facilities built in schools
 - Local market for reusable menstrual products strengthened
- Activities in Papua New Guinea:
 - Training for school teachers
 - SRH service provision
 - WASH facilities built in schools

Activity Spotlight!

Developing a sexuality curriculum

- Government collaboration takes time, but is integral to success
- Teachers require training on materials and continuous support
- The curriculum itself must follow best practice guidelines regarding inclusive language and age-appropriateness



Thoughts from a teacher: Fiona Gesia



- “It gave us a lot of confidence. I see a lot of teachers that aren’t confident to share this type of information, but after this workshop everyone was open and felt free to discuss it.”
- “I can see big changes in the children, the way they think, the way they tend to respect each other. When a girl is having a period, it is normal. Unlike my previous experience of teaching, respect has come.”

Conclusions

Cross-sectoral collaboration and evidence based experimentation can lead to practical, effective approaches to improving a country's menstrual health ecosystem and increasing the reach and quality of education and services available to young people



Menstrual Hygiene Management in Solomon Islands

The story of Kaleko Steifree



Mary Elizabeth Ramosaea



Schools Programs



Community Programs



Sales and Marketing



Reflections on Kaleko Steifree 3rd Anniversary

- What have been the biggest learnings and reflections
- What have been the barriers and challenges
- What is needed to push menstrual health forward in the Solomon Islands and the Pacific





Global Menstrual Hygiene Day Webinar Thursday 28th May 2020

Presenter: Ms. Naomi Navoce
Program Officer (Gender Interim)
Pacific Disability Forum



Global Menstrual Hygiene Day Thursday 28th May 2020

Introduction

The Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) is a regional peak body that works in partnership with Disabled Persons Organisations in the Pacific region. Our aim is to build the capacity of these organisations and improve the lives of persons with disabilities in the Pacific through advocacy.

We passionately believe that everyone should have the basic right to menstruate without shame or stigma.



Why reaching women and girls with disabilities is important in menstrual health

Women and girls with disabilities may face challenges and barriers:

- In accessing sufficient support and especially health services
- WASH infrastructure might not cater for different impairments
- Maintaining hygiene (changing materials, personal hygiene and washing) can be challenging for some people, especially with limited physical abilities

That is why it's important to reach out to women and girls with disabilities in menstrual health and hygiene.

Reaching out to women and girls with disabilities enables them to:

- Reach their full potential on their management of menstruation hygienically
- Access menstrual products and safe, hygienic facilities in which to use them are essential for anyone who menstruates.

Empowerment and Visibility in the Pacific Menstrual Health Campaign



“For women and girls with disabilities, lack of information on managing menstruation is a silent killer.

Advocacy and awareness is essential for all women and girls with disabilities to be informed on their bodies and their rights - **SILENT NO MORE!**”

“

Fiji Disability Persons Organisation
Menstrual Health working group



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Taking action to address disability in menstrual health.

Women and girls with disabilities faces two-fold discrimination: as stigmatization associated with both disability and gender.

1. The approach to menstrual management in abled-bodied women and girls should be the same for women and girls with disabilities
2. The approach for women and girls with intellectual disabilities should be tailored or according to the severity of the disability.
3. Women and girls with disabilities who can manage their own toilet hygiene can usually learn to manage their menses independently
4. Information on menstrual management should be appropriate to their level of understanding.
5. When assessing menstrual problems, it may help to chart any symptoms against the menstrual cycle to confirm that they are related
6. Disability Inclusive menstrual management in a way forward to address any gaps in the work around MHM globally
7. Budget for MHM program and activities to be disability inclusive and collaborate with women and girls with disabilities and their respective organisation

What are actions people will leave with today to improve their work on MHM with women and girls with disabilities? Add it in the chat box!

Discussion: Share your thoughts

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Thank you for joining us



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