Post-COVID menstrual trends, attitudes and practices: A promising approach to sustained innovations in water and climate action advocacy

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Presentation outline

- Definition of terms
- SDG 6.2
- Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Policy
- Men and menstruation
- Awareness campaigns and sensitization sessions
- Menstrual health research and advocacy
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- Intervention summary
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Definition of terms

- **Menstrual health**
  Is defined as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in relation to the menstrual cycle.

  *A definition for policy, practice and research. Sexual and reproductive health matters*

- **Climate action**
  Stepped-up efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-induced impacts (SDG 13)

- **Post pandemic**
  A period following a pandemic (COVID-19)
Sustainable Development Goal 6. Target 2

Achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

Which are these needs of women and girls??
Kenya is one of the first African nations to develop a stand-alone MHM Policy. The country is championing to eliminate all forms of discrimination tied to menstruation. Especially discrimination based on social norms that harm the physical, emotional and psychological integrity and human rights of women, girls and non-binary.

The policy has a corresponding MHM Strategy document (2019-2024) that demonstrates how men and boys can plug in and support dignified menstruation.
Men and menstruation…5 years ago

MH Day published a study in 2016 that showed two out of three women in rural Kenya receive menstrual hygiene articles from sexual partners. This means that a majority of women in the countryside depend on men for managing their menstruation. Some women even engage in sexual activity with the sole aim of receiving the necessary menstrual products in exchange.

According to a situation analysis carried out by Ministry of Health (2016), 46% of the respondents used disposable pads, with only 6% using reusable pads and 7% relying on old cloths, pieces of blanket, chicken feathers, mud and even newspapers.
Awareness campaigns and sensitization sessions

Empowering communities with information on engaging men and boys as ambassadors/changemakers who challenge status quo of myths, misconceptions, taboos, cultural beliefs and practices that promote discrimination through shame, fear, discomfort and lack of dignity for women and girls during menstruation. Menstruation is natural.
Menstrual health research and advocacy

For increased funding and involvement of youth and women in the sector. Supporting information technology and sector innovations especially on water accessibility and sustainable menstrual waste disposal mechanisms.
Capacity building and partnership/allyship and media engagement

Promoting training, networking and exchange programs to support menstrual access, availability and menstrual information while advancing MHM from a sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) perspective.
Intervention summary

Men and boys inclusivity in MHM programming

Menstrual health research and advocacy

Awareness campaigns and sensitization sessions

Training, capacity building, partnerships and media engagement

Feedback and reports for sharing and learning

Innovative approaches in implementing MHM activities post COVID

Enabling environments through policies, guidelines and strategic documents

Menstruation and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

Linking interventions with access to water (profiling and promoting reusable products)

Environmentally friendly interventions. Sustainable menstrual waste disposal mechanism

Highlighting men and boys supporting MHM
### Key takeaways

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Level</th>
<th>Community Level</th>
<th>Programmers</th>
<th>Policy makers/Donors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normalize menstruation conversations(make it comfortable for men and boys to talk about MHM)</td>
<td>Map areas of need including unpacking avenues for sustainability (pegged on administration and the sub national government structures)</td>
<td>Embrace appropriate community entrance approaches sensitive to culture and religious reservation regarding menstruation</td>
<td>Support policies, guidelines and strategies that create enabling environments for sustainable menstrual waste disposal</td>
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<td>Properly segregate solid waste and dispose</td>
<td>Enhance partnerships with sector actors and players in advancing community menstrual health agenda</td>
<td>Actively mainstream the broader goal of environmentally-friendly menstrual interventions in WASH programming</td>
<td>Support research, advocacy and resource investment including financial requirements for sustainable menstrual health interventions</td>
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<td>Avail requirements for making reusable menstrual materials</td>
<td>Champion the process of developing a practical and appropriate waste disposal mechanism</td>
<td>Collaborate with other agencies and governmental departments in water and environment sectors</td>
<td>Ensure pragmatic linkage between menstrual health intervention and climate action</td>
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<td>Ensure availability of clean water and private spaces</td>
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<td>Identify male MHM champions and prioritize media engagement and enhance allyship in menstrual programming</td>
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Thank you