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WASH
ALLIANCE

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Everyone, Everywhere



WSSCC
WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION
COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL



Collaboration on Menstrual Health & Leave No One Behind



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10	Report on Routine Sessions at MHH Lab <i>Pre-Covid the unique MHM Lab was a special centre wherein dialogue around menstruation could take place with trained educators to facilitate people to break the silence around menstrual health. Post Covid-19, MHH Educators not only utilised the digital platform to spread awareness on MHH but also supported the online one day and four-day trainings. They organised several trainings and interactions with the diverse community within the Ashram during lockdown but also in local communities during unlock following guidelines of social distancing and masks.</i>

MHM Reports December 2019-February 2020

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I. Why Menstruation Matters?

- According to the data collated by the Ministry of Health, only 12% of women and girls have access to sanitary napkins in India while a majority of them relies on outdated, unhygienic methods during menstruation.
- India is home to 355 million menstruating women and girls*. Around 54% of these girls are unaware of menstruation before they have their first period; 77% do not know that the uterus is the source of the bleeding; only 45% believe that menstruation is normal; and a vast majority observe socio-cultural, religious or food taboos during their period.
- Compounding this, 70% of mothers, who are girls' main source of information, consider menstruation to be dirty and polluting.
- Latest National Family Health Survey 4, India's DHS (2015-16), reported that 42.4% of young women aged 15–24 are using unhygienic methods of protection during their period.
- An estimated 60% of adolescent girls are enrolled in about 1.4 million schools. A systematic review on MHM in India found that 24% of school girls did not attend school during their menses, and only 37% changed their absorbents in school.
- Given the multiple challenges women and adolescent girls face, it is evident that promoting menstrual hygiene management (MHM) is not only a sanitation matter; it is also an *important* step towards safeguarding the dignity, bodily integrity and overall life opportunities of women and girls. (World Bank)



<https://www.dasra.org/news-and-events/only-48-of-the-adolescent-girls-population-in-india-are-aware-about-menstruation-prior-to-the-first-period>

II. Background

The Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) in collaboration and partnership with the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), a UNOPS hosted entity, had joined together from January 2019 to November 2020 to enable and strengthen:

- Universal sanitation access leaving no one behind:
- Break the silence around menstruation, address stigmas and taboos that prevent access/awareness about the menstrual cycle, menstrual health and hygiene
- Help ensure that government policies prioritize equal access to sanitation for women, girls, and marginalized individuals and groups.

GIWA is the world's first initiative that is engaging the planet's many faiths as allies in efforts to create a world where every human being has access to safe drinking water, improved sanitation and proper hygiene. Launched by UNICEF at UNICEF World Headquarters under sponsorship of the Government of the Netherlands and USAID, GIWA envisions a water-secure world in which safe and sustainable drinking water and improved sanitation will be accessible for all. Learn more about GIWA: www.washalliance.org

The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) is a global, multi-stakeholder membership and partnership organization that works with poor people, organizations, governments and local entrepreneurs to improve sanitation and hygiene at scale. WSSCC facilitates sector coordination at national, regional and global levels, and engages rights holders and duty bearers to adopt policy guidelines on menstrual hygiene and disability. WSSCC's India Support Unit was also a development partner of the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS), Government of India (GOI) for the implementation of its national flagship program, Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G, or Clean India Mission – Rural Areas).

Together, WSSCC and GIWA came together to support capacity development on Menstrual Hygiene Management through mass awareness campaigns, short term trainings, Training of Trainers (ToT's), safe spaces for dialogue, better known as "MHM Labs," as well as to bring faith-based organizations and communities together to scale education, outreach and awareness on MHM.



III. Prayagraj Kumbh Mela & the Summit of Grace

In early 2019, WSSCC and GIWA embarked upon a unique MHM Awareness campaign at the world's largest gathering of Humanity, the Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. The highly-successful campaign realized the endorsements of many of India's foremost faith leaders, as well as the participation of the Hon'ble Speaker of Lok Sabha, the Hon'ble State Minister of HRD, and others, as well as media coverage that was seen by tens of millions.

The partnership was launched with a two day, from the 27-29th January, 2019, Summit of Grace in which renowned women leaders from different religions, countries, organizations, and fields came together on the banks of the Prayagraj Sangam to discuss and then commit themselves towards playing active and collaborative roles in saving the children and communities of India from death, disease and stunting through improved Menstrual Hygiene Management and WASH through GIWA's historic Summit of Grace. The historic Summit also placed a special focus on ending child marriage and ensuring all girls stay in school.

During the full course of the Kumbh Mela we also provided a multi-week MHM lab outreach programme, which inspired and educated thousands of women, girls, men and boys about the subject. The lab's affiliation with GIWA's Faith-Based approach drove conversations surrounding MHM into the mainstream while also raising awareness on the issue.

Our Events and Outreach Focused on:

1. She is the Solution: The Summit of Grace
2. The Gandhian Resurgence Summit
3. The Provision of an MHM Lab at the Kumbh Mela
4. Educational Outreach at the Kumbha Mela's first Toilet Café

Please find Annexure F for the Full Report on GIWA's Kumbh Mela Intervention, in partnership with the WSSCC

Our Activities Included:

1. Participation by influential Faith Leaders
2. Participation by Key Political Leaders
3. Mass Outreach to Thousands
4. Mass Media Coverage to millions & Video Production
5. The breaking of stigmas through education and messaging at a major faith event by esteemed faith leaders, as well as educators and outreach workers and more.



IV. MHM Training of Trainers

A five-day Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Training of Trainers was completed at the GIWA Secretariat, Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh in August, 2019, jointly organized by the WSSCC and GIWA, in association with the Institute of Development Support, Dehradun. Eleven trainers and high-level WSSCC representatives trained nearly 70 participants from all across India and the world. All participants were hand-selected and the majority of whom have more than 5-10 years of working in the development service sector. This special and one-of-a-kind training program is a vital step towards inspiring and encouraging Trainers to passionately and compassionately serve and improve sanitation and hygiene for women and girls across India and around the world.



The training worked with a three-pronged approach on MHM— the first pillar focuses on breaking the silence on the subject, working to eliminate taboos and stigma associated with menstruation. The second pillar comprises of educating the public on the different resources available for menstrual hygiene management. The final pillar tackles the safe disposal of products and materials used. The participants were also trained about MHM Lab and how safe spaces can be created to allow for these issues to be discussed and mass awareness to be raised.

[Click here](#) to learn more about this unique and innovative Training of the Trainers.

V. Completion of the Leave No One Behind Summit

GIWA and WSSCC, with technical support of Fresh Water Action Network South Asia (FANSA) organised an innovative and unique three-day Consultation on the critical theme of “Leave No One Behind” particularly with regard to access to Water and Sanitation (SDG 6) at Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh from the 16th to 18th of December.



The consultation was organised with the aim to include those who have long been excluded in the benefits of development. Furthermore, to ensure that no one in India will be left behind in access to the human right to clean water, safe and sufficient sanitation and hygiene (WASH), including menstrual hygiene and health, and in the access and use of related WASH services.

GIWA, WSSCC and FANSA deeply believe that this achievement will greatly contribute to the wider and fuller enjoyment of all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible human rights for everyone, and for an increasingly equitable society for all women, men and children. Many participants expressed immense gratitude for hosting the conference in the sacred pilgrimage area, where meaningful conversations and experiences were easily facilitated.



Recommendations and findings from the Consultation were shared for the SDGs Voluntary National Review of the Niti Ayog, Government of India. **To read the special Leave No One Behind Summit Newsletter online, visit <https://washalliance.org/publication/LNOB-Summit-Newsletter.pdf>**

To read the detailed Consultation Findings, please visit: <https://washalliance.org/publication/LNOB-Summit-Report.pdf>

VI. Report on 5-day MHM ToTs/ 30 one day MHM Trainings during Pandemic and Lockdown

India came to a standstill with the announcement of a 21 days nationwide lockdown on 24th of March 2020 in the face of the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic, which eventually got extended till almost end of May 2020 nationwide, and till reporting date, in most of the containment zones including Rishikesh. Being no exception, GIWA Secretariat was closed down and restrictions as per norms were followed firmly. Activities planned including woven around MHM too suffered as lockdown restricted people from stepping out. Visit to communities, mingling with community members all had to stop. Scheduled residential trainings required participants to travel and stay. These all faced the brunt of lockdown.

Amidst all these challenges, the GIWA Think Tank sensing the need of community and realizing the importance of task in hand pondered over possibilities and innovative ideas that could help spread awareness, removing stigma/taboo especially amidst Covid-19. With movements and meetings restricted, GIWA opted for online ICT solutions and remodeled, restructured the awareness and capacity building modules and campaign that included:



1. **Special Webinars** were organised to bring Faith Leaders and Faith Communities together to combat discrimination, fake news etc. as well as raise awareness on relevant themes and international days of global significance (Report on these Special Webinars attached as Annexure A)

AFRICA'S FAITH LEADERSHIP IN TIMES OF CRISIS
 Hosted by: GLOBAL INTERFAITH WASH ALLIANCE
 With Technical Support from: UNICEF, URBAN LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE
 In Partnership with: WSSCC

Ramadan Response to Covid-19
 Hosted by the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance
 with Technical Support from UNICEF, Tanzania, in Partnership with URBAN and WSSCC

Panelists include: Puja Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Dr. Khalid Ibrahim, Sheikh Hassan, Ramiel Karam, Anis Mubarek Khalil, Sadhi Bhagwati Saraswati, Sheikh Othman Mohamed Nour, Sheikh Khalid Al Hilwani, Sheikh Saleemullah, Sheikh Mohamed Ali.

THURSDAY MAY 7th
 10am EST - 9am EGT - 12:30pm IST
 JOIN US LIVE FOR THIS ONLINE PANEL.

GLOBAL INTERFAITH WASH ALLIANCE | **WSSCC**

Faith Response to Covid-19
 Special Interfaith Webinar Discussing the Faith Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic as India Fights the Corona Virus

Panelists include: Puja Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Anis Mubarek Khalil, Giani Harpreet Singh, Sadhi Bhagwati Saraswati, Ver Dhammapalmy, Secy General, Inter Buddhist Confederation, E. Charles Director, Caritas India.

APRIL 2nd at 11am
 Join us LIVE for This Forum on:
 @ParmarthNiketan

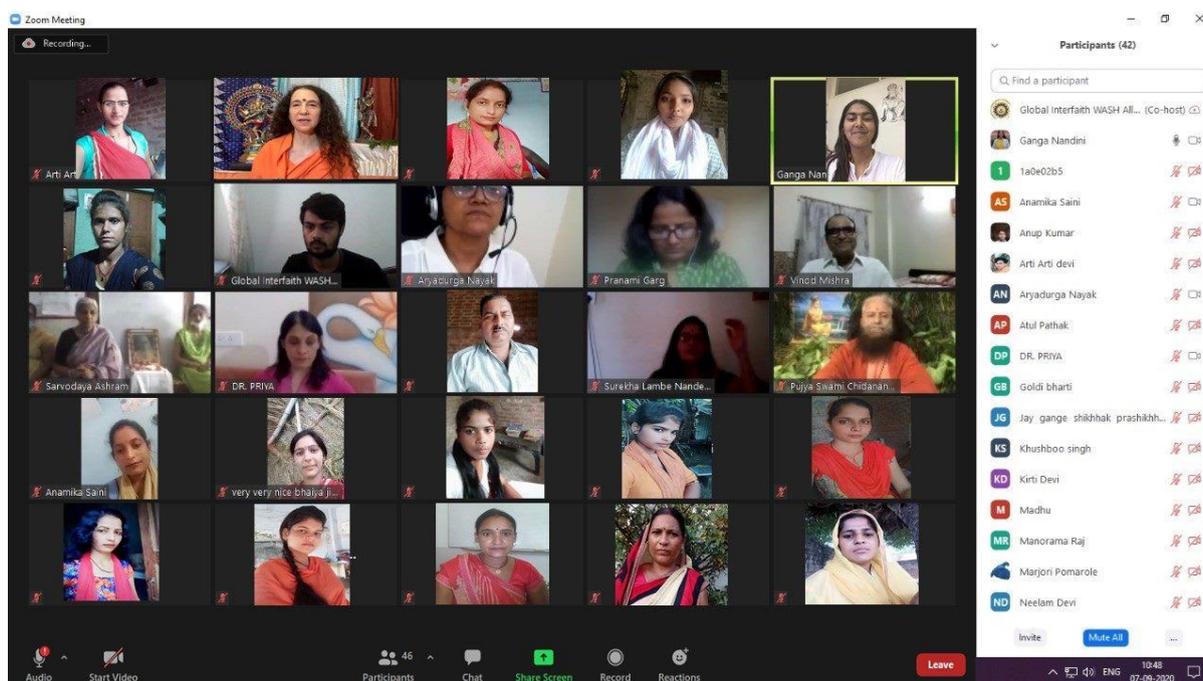
PLANTING SEEDS FOR A NEW NORMAL
 EARTH DAY 2020 ONLINE CELEBRATION

Panelists include: Puja Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Rabi David Rosen, Bhai Samir Mohinder Singhji, Maulana Mahmood Madaniji, Rev. Michael Beckwith, Sue Coates, Dr. Vandana Shiva, Sadhi Bhagwati Saraswati, Dr. Azza Karim, Rev. Victor Kazanjani, Audrey Kitagawa, Iyad Abumoghli, Andrew Harvey, Rabi Awanam Soetemrop, Father Paul Moonjely.

WEDNESDAY 22ND APRIL
 7-9:30pm IST, 2:30-5pm BST, 9:30am-12pm EST, 6:30-9am PDT

Organized by: UNICEF, PARLIAMENT, WSSCC, Religions for Peace, URBAN, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance.

1. 30 One Day Orientation Webinars to raise awareness amongst diverse faith communities, organisations and institutions that Periods don't end in Pandemics and therefore the efforts to break the silence should not as well. **(List and Report of these One Day Orientation Trainings attached as Annexure B)**



2. Three First Ever Online 4-5 Day MHM Training of the Trainers listed below:

S No	Date	Organisation Name	City, State	Trainers	Annexure No
1	7-10 th September, 2020	Sarvodaya Ashram	Hardoi, Muzaffarnagar, UP	Pranami, Surekha & Dr Priya	C1
2	15-18 th September, 2020	Jan Kalyan Samiti	Northern India	Ishleen Kaur, Surekha & Dr Priya	C2
3	20-25 th October, 2020	Caritas India	Delhi, Rishikesh, Ladakh	Ishleen Kaur & Dr Priya	C3

VII. Report on Routine Sessions at MHH Lab

The Menstrual Hygiene Management Lab in Rishikesh also known as the Swachhta Shakti Theatre was been created by the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, in partnership with the Water Supply Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), and was located right near the iconic Ram Jhula Bridge in the Rishikesh Main Market area from December 2019 til February 2020 and then shifted to the world famous Parmarth Niketan Ashram in March 2020.



This innovative space has been created to raise awareness on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) and to create a safe space where women, girls and community members can come together to learn about as well as challenge the stigmas and taboos associated with menstruation. Visitors, including tourists and pilgrims of all genders from across India and around the world, as well as from all walks of life and diverse backgrounds, are made aware about the menstrual cycle and why it is important for our communities to welcome as well as talk about periods.



A mobile MHM Lab was also a special feature of a special Gandhi Jayanti programme at the Gandhi Ashram, Delhi in September, 2019 visited by HH the Dalai Lama, Hon'ble President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovindji, respected interfaith leaders and many others. The Leave No One Behind Summit at Parmarth Niketan in December, 2019 also featured a special MHM Lab tent.



The MHM Lab sessions covered changes faced by a young girl during puberty, why girls menstruate and not boys, how the menstrual cycle works, how to calculate one's period cycle, how one should take care of hygiene during periods, and concludes with a pledge to break the silence about menstruation at a personal and community level.

Please find report of the MHH Lab Sessions conducted in Rishikesh from December 2019-February 2020

With restrictions on public gatherings and public interactions post pandemic, MHH Educators were reengaged and motivated to:

- **Support** for with the online Training of the Trainers in addition to assistance with online one day webinars and technical support when required
- **Conducted Sessions**
 - Undertook several well-planned residential sessions with the diverse Parmarth Gurukul and Ashram Community in Lockdown
 - Utilised the digital platform to spread awareness on MHH by doing shorter sessions with teachers and schools affiliated with GIWA or conducted a few sessions in communities post Lockdown following necessary guidelines

S No	Date	Organisation Name	City, State	Trainers	Annexure No
1	1 st and 6 th August, 2020	Parmarth Niketan Ashram	Rishikesh, Uttarakhand	Dr Priya & Pushplata	D1

2	27-28 th August, 2020 16th October, 2020	Parmarth Vidya Mandir— In Person and Online Sessions	Rishikesh, Uttarakhand	Dr Priya & Rohit Biljwan Vandana Sharma	D2
3	6-15 th October, 2020	Rishikumars of the Parmarth Gurukul	Rishikesh, Uttarakhand	Satyaveer, Vandana Sharma & others	D3
4	10 th October	GIWA's Affiliated School Teachers	Rishikesh, Uttarakhand	Vandana Sharma	D4
5	October & November	List of all the community MHM Lab Sessions and events summarized	Rishikesh, Uttarakhand	R.C Shah & Yagika Raturi	D5



