

Building global capacity for menstrual hygiene management in emergencies

Final Report / **Training/ Workshop** / 25^h – 28th July 2024, Feldkirch, Austria



Background: why this training?

Hygiene Promotion is a planned, systematic approach delivered by Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers, to enable people to take action to prevent water, sanitation and hygiene-related diseases by mobilization and engagement of the affected population, their knowledge, and resources. An often-overlooked aspect is the inclusion of menstrual hygiene in every humanitarian response. Women and girls have menstrual hygiene needs from day 1 of any crisis, and a holistic approach which addresses the 3 core components of MHM - access to materials, private and safe facilities, and information - is essential.

This is specialisation training within AutRCs emergency WASH training pathway, and it is closely related to general hygiene promotion programming (eg. by using the “8-steps of hygiene promotion framework”). We think that the skills and concepts learned within a menstrual hygiene framework are generalizable to hygiene promotion in its broader sense.

It aims to prepare AutRC and other NS staff/volunteers to implement high quality hygiene promotion programmes and operations which adhere to IFRC WASH guidelines for hygiene promotion in emergencies. This training is aligned with [IFRCs WASH Technical Competency Framework](#) (Tier B - Implement high quality MHM activities which adhere to IFRC guidelines and tools for MHM) for hygiene promotion, and the [Rapid Response Profile for WASH Officer – Hygiene Promoter](#).

Traditional class-room based trainings lack real world exposure that builds confidence to translate skills learned in a controlled environment to a messy reality, while at the same time practicing those skills on disaster affected populations needs careful supervision to follow the do-no-harm principle. The environment of this exercise, being situated in a real-world music festival, with real

festival guests that can be approached to talk about menstrual health & hygiene provided the opportunity to develop skills and confidence via trial& error, without running into ethical problems.

Who, when and where?

The workshop took place from Thursday 25th July till Sunday 28th July in a music festival site and an adjacent school in Feldkirch, Austria. 17 staff and volunteers (12f / 5m) participated from 7 Red Cross/Red Crescent societies (Zambia, Spain, Syria, Norway, Lebanon, Canada, Austria), mostly with WASH-software or health backgrounds.

Overall goals and learning objectives

The participants know the IFRC frameworks for hygiene and menstrual hygiene management promotion in emergencies and practice various skills and concepts of their choice that are needed in typical hygiene & menstrual hygiene programs.

Secondary goal was to provide a platform for capacity and experience sharing, to strengthen the network of Software-focussed WASH staff& volunteers.

By the end of the exercise, participants can:

- describe Hygiene Promotion in Emergencies and Menstrual Hygiene Management and their importance in a WASH response
- list the steps of Hygiene Promotion in the IFRC guidelines for Hygiene Promotion in Emergencies, and
- describe how they can be used in a WASH response
- have practiced key hygiene promotion methods with a focus on menstrual hygiene management topics

Description of the training

The training focused on the practical application of the [IFRC Red Cross tools to promote menstrual hygiene](http://www.watsanmissionassistant.org). that can be found on the <http://www.watsanmissionassistant.org>. Another resource that was heavily used throughout the training was the WASH-cluster [HP in emergencies compendium](#). After completing some pre-reading (see Annex A for the list of pre-reading) and a one-hour preparatory webinar, a 3 days face-to-face workshop was held.

A limited number of theoretical units were held but mostly the training consisted of the practical application of the tools to promote menstrual hygiene of the guest at the music festival.

4 trainers from the UK, Nepal and Austria Add facilitated sessions face-to-face and supported the participants in practical exercises. Additionally 2 health professionals from Swedish RC ran a remote presentation about the physiology of menstruation and menstrual health.

The structure of the training was based on the 8 steps of hygiene promotion, as layed out in the IFRC manuals. Consequently, over the course of the training, the situation regarding menstrual hygiene was surveyed in the scenarios, goals were developed, possible interventions were tested and finally, possible monitoring methods were discussed.

The festival offered the opportunity to talk to real people about their real problems, knowledge and preferences about menstruation, which formed the basis of assessing needs, barriers and motivators. On a daily basis, these interactions were then reflected upon in the wider group, to share experiences about content but also the process, and facilitate improvements in e.g. facilitation skills.



Discussions with festival guests



Team debriefing after FGD



Plenary reflection -FGD content and process



Decorated menstruation stand

For this purpose, a "menstrual stands" was decorated and used on 2 evenings to attract an audience for possible discussions, or to create a suitable setting for in-depth discussions. This in itself was an exercise in applied hygiene promotion. In addition, the training participants wore specially designed T-shirts in the festival area to attract the attention of the audience, which worked well. Products that were developed during the workshop for the scenarios (e.g.: menstrual hygiene kits or information material) were exhibited on the festival grounds and discussed with the guests with respect to their acceptance and comprehensibility.

One of the recommendations from the previous training was the inclusion of dispenser systems into the training curriculum, which is not yet covered in the IFRC guidelines, but offers an interesting possibility to distribute menstrual hygiene items with a high degree of privacy. Consequently, 2 different dispenser systems were procured for this training, one simple metal box from which tampons and pads can be grabbed without limitations, and another more complex dispenser from the company [Redlocker](#), which limits the dispensing to 1 product every 4 minutes. It was planned to have both systems installed in parallel, at the two toilet areas in the festival. Unfortunately, due to technical constraints, only the Redlocker system could be installed at the indoor toilet. This dispenser was used for interviews with festival staff and guests and also was the focus of IEC materials and some post-distribution monitoring. The dispenser was left at the site after the training and was used for another 2 weeks in the festival. Feedback from the festival organizers about its use was very positive.

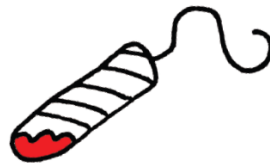


Discussion with dispenser-user



Dispenser monitoring

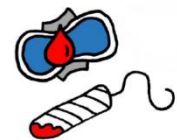
TAMPON VERGESSEN?



GRATIS PRODUKTE HIER



HOW TO



1. Dreh das Rad
2. Auch wenn es leer wirkt sind meist noch Produkte drinnen
3. Wenn es wirkt als wäre es defekt, oder sich das Rad nicht drehen lässt, warte ein paar Minuten. Die Maschine sperrt nach der Ausgabe eines Produktes für 4 Minuten.
4. Bei Problemen wende Dich an das Personal.
5. Viel Spaß am Festival!

1. Turn the knob
2. If it looks empty it probably is not
3. If it seems stuck or not working wait a couple of minutes. The dispenser locks for 4 Minutes after giving out one product.
4. If you have any problems contact the staff.
5. Enjoy the festival!



IEC material for dispenser system

PGI (Protection, Gender & Inclusion) was also part of the training, both in theory and practice. With respect to inclusion, some barriers for people with disabilities could be identified at the festival and reported to the organizers, and the festivals awareness concept (prevention of sexual and other harassment) provided an excellent opportunity to practice the establishment of referral pathways and staff sensitization.

Throughout the training, participants were encouraged to share experiences about MHM programming with one-another, and participants from Syrian Arab Red Crescent and Zambian Red Cross Society gave presentations about actual menstrual hygiene interventions.

Last but not least, market aspects were covered in the training. Apart from a theoretical introduction, simple, on-site market assessments were done at local hygiene items stores, and 2 Nepali producers of menstrual hygiene items were remotely interviewed. Furthermore, different CVA modalities were used throughout the training, to exemplify the concepts that were explained in the classroom: Food was provided via unconditional, unrestricted cash support (50€ per day per participant), the groups received value vouchers from a drug-store to shop for menstrual hygiene items for their hygiene kits and finally festival guests that devoted time for being interviewed by participants received a commodity voucher for a drink at the festival food-stalls. Finally, tampons were distributed in kind in the festival with the dispenser.



Menstrual hygiene material market assessment

As there was a similar training run by German RC simultaneously, participants produced short daily summary videos to update the team in Germany about the progress in our training. Parallely, the German team send regular videos about their activities, which provided motivation and ideas for our group. A slightly more structured approach to those videos could add value to the debriefing sessions that the facilitators held on a daily basis.

An agenda of the training “as run” can be found in Annex B. One significant change to the previous years training program was that this time hypothetical scenarios were totally dropped and all the participants worked on activities that were related to the actual music festival. The festival and the opportunity to interact with real people sets this training apart from other, more classroom based trainings, and the festival allowed for enough practical exercises to work on for every participant.

Outcome

By means of anonymous surveys before (17 replies) and after the workshop (11 replies), the participants' self-confidence in various competencies that are important for the implementation of menstrual hygiene programs was assessed: imparting basic menstrual knowledge, using "cash & voucher" methods to promote hygiene, applying qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain data on menstrual hygiene, creating communication materials, evaluating the "menstrual-friendliness" of sanitary infrastructure, compilation of hygiene kits, monitoring, consideration of people with disabilities, analysis of social norms.

The self-confidence of the participants increased significantly in all aspects during the course of the workshop.

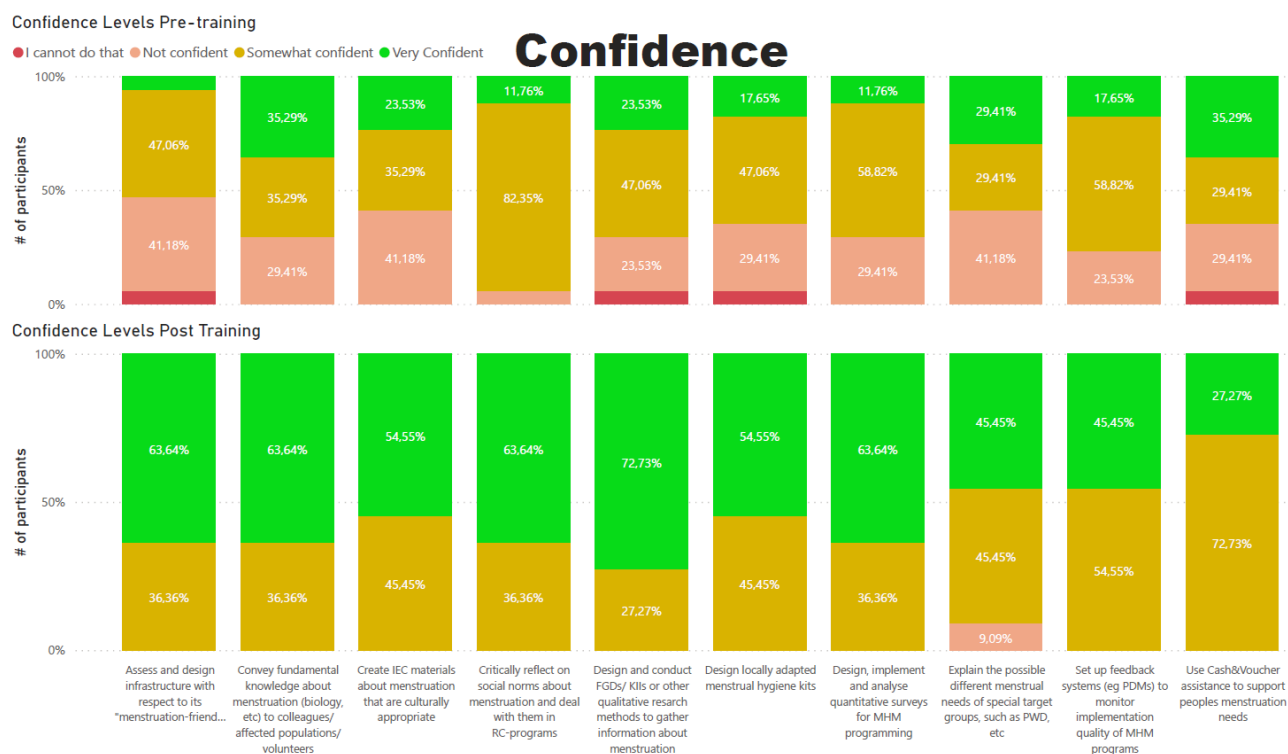


Figure 1 - Pre-&Post-workshop confidence self assessment

In addition, the general feedback from the workshop participants was positive as seen in Figure 3. The aspects which received the least positive feedback were the sleeping arrangement (gender separated, improvised dormitory style sleeping in a school gym) the sanitary facilities (gender separated group showers) and the training venue (most likely referring to the limited suitability of the gym for theoretical sessions). However, even for those aspects the overwhelming majority did find them at least somewhat conducive.

Direct Comments also indicate high satisfaction of the participants and show that the unconventional setting in the context of a music festival left the participants with impressive, positive memories of the topic of menstruation and hygiene promotion, which will hopefully motivate them to deal with the topic beyond the training.

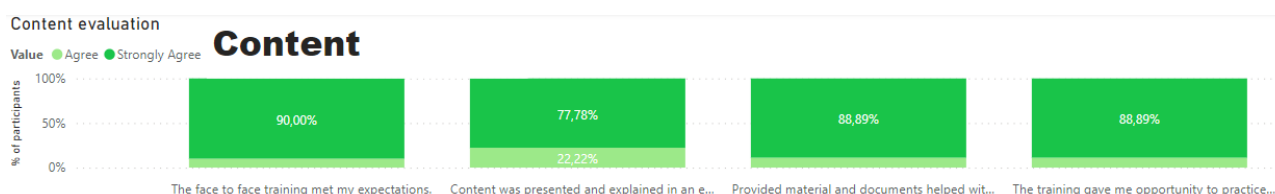


Figure 2 - Post-workshop rating - Content

Logistics evaluation

Value ● Neutral ● Not conducive ● Somewhat conducive ● Very conducive

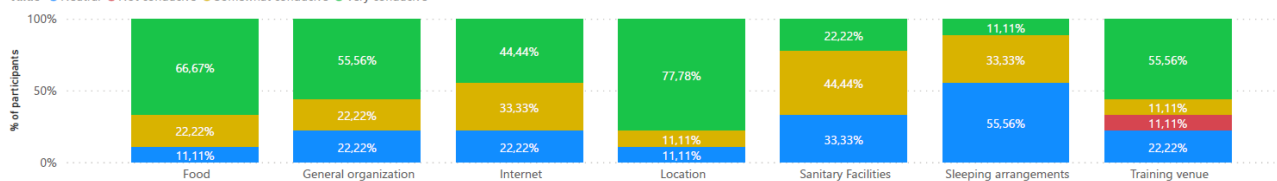


Figure 3 - Post-workshop rating - Logistics

The opportunity to interact with real people about real menstruation issues and directly use some of the tools from the training (in particular focus group discussions) in real life was repeatedly mentioned as a highlight of this workshop, in particular as it gave some of the participants the first opportunity to discuss a somewhat sensitive topic with open minded people. This included interactions between male participants and female festival guests as well as discussions with male festival guests about menstruation, an opportunity that does not often arise in real work/ deployments. On top of that, some participants positively highlighted their first ever experience of talking with non-binary/ transgender persons.

The anonymous surveys pre- and post-training also contained a small knowledge quiz. The results are shown in Figure 4.

Knowledge test Answers

Value ● correct ● wrong



Figure 4 - Knowledge Test Results (eg. 36.36% of participants answered correctly 5 of the 6 questions)

Questions were rather simple and the post-training sample size was quite small (only 11 responses, out of which 2 did not fill in the quiz), so the data is not very robust. However the test does indicate that some key messages did stick with the participants (in particular the knowledge about IFRCs conceptualisation of MHM programs into material, infrastructure and information and the knowledge about useful [IFRC](#) and [WASH cluster](#) websites).

Several participants mentioned possible follow up activities, such as briefing their colleagues, analysing existing WASH project for their MHM friendliness and by the time this report is written (September '24) the team from Zambia had already used the learnings from this training in their national level MHM training.

Improvements

Some issues were flagged for possible improvements (from direct feedback, anonymous survey or trainer debriefing):

- Several participants mentioned that the workshop program was too packed and left too little room for individual reflections, session debriefing (eg the market assessment), participant led objective setting and practical M&E exercises or informal experience exchange.
- Increase attendance of men
- Make available printed copy of the MHM guidelines for each participant
- Disaggregate the data in the surveys according to gender
- While the daily videos were a good idea, but with more guidance they could be used to practically train participatory video for feedback and use this info for improving and documenting the training
- More focus on the inclusion of people with disabilities, as the topic was only briefly touched upon
- Install both dispenser types to allow for comparisons
- Better coordination with partners that offer similar trainings (although the festival season in Europe is short, and at least this year it was no problem to fill 2 simultaneous trainings)
- More session specific recommendations can be found in the list in Annex B
- Outside of the training, we would also recommend to include a section on dispenser systems in future updates of the IFRC MHM guidelines
- Continue with further exploring cross-sectoral content, facilitation and participation of WaSH/Health/SRHR/PGI/CEA in order to approach MHM holistically

In general, we think that the training can be replicated next year without major changes other than expanding it to 4 or even 5 days.



Want to know more? **Contact**

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ANNEX A – Pre-reading list

| Mandatory | Link |
|---|---|
| The 8 Steps for Hygiene Promotion in Emergencies | https://ifrc.csod.com/client/ifrc/default.aspx |
| MHM IE | https://watsanmissionassistant.org/?mdocs-file=6638 |
| PGI in WASH | https://watsanmissionassistant.org/?mdocs-file=12158 |
| CEA in WASH | https://watsanmissionassistant.org/?mdocs-file=19757 |
| CVA in WASH | https://watsanmissionassistant.org/?mdocs-file=13934 |
| IFRC Case studies | https://watsanmissionassistant.org/?mdocs-file=6636 |
| Definition of menstrual health | https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8098749/pdf/ZRHM_29_1911618.pdf |
| Sphere MHM standard | https://handbook.spherestandards.org/en/sphere/#ch006_003_003 |
| Optional | Link |
| GWC research repository | https://www.washcluster.net/resources?f%5B0%5D=theme%3Amenstrual%20health%20management |
| MHM mini-guide | https://www.elrha.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/themhminemergenciestoolkitminiguide.pdf |
| IFRC 8 steps | https://watsanmissionassistant.org/?mdocs-file=11386 |
| Emergency HP compendium | https://www.emergency-wash.org/hygiene/en/hp-components/8 |
| Menstrual Health indicators | https://watsanmissionassistant.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/priority_list_of_indicators_for_girls_menstrual_health_and_hygiene-technical_guidance_for_national_monitoring.pdf |
| JMP menstrual health data | https://washdata.org/monitoring/menstrual-health |
| Vanuatu Research | https://oldmedia.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/MHM-Report_final_21May.pdf |
| Bangladesh Case study | https://watsanmissionassistant.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Report_MHM-and-Solid-waste_PMO-CXB_August2018_final.pdf |
| MHM friendly latrine manual | https://watsanmissionassistant.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/IFRC_MHM-Friendly-Accessible-WASH-Facility-Manual_March2022_WithoutAppendices.pdf |
| Recordings of webinar series about the IFRC case study pack | Find the recordings on the "Playlist RCRC Menstrual Hygiene Management Experiences" on the IFRC learning platform: https://ifrc.csod.com/ |
| The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies | https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-15-0614-7 |
| Cash Flow The businesses of menstruation | https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/57800 |
| Period. End of Sentence. | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QdIKervJ0-Y |
| Padman | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-K9uix8vO_A |
| Global MH-day campaign | https://menstrualhygieneday.org/ |

ANNEX B - Training Agenda "as run"

| Time As run aprx. | Led by | Topic | Method | Comments |
|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Thursday 25.7.24 | | | | |
| 17.00 – 18.30 | Alex, with Annie | Welcome, housekeeping & introductions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenary going through housekeeping, outline etc. • Standing in line according to time took to get here • Standing in line according to knowledge & experience of HP & MHM • Standing in line according to the last menstruation & ask men – when did they last have sex • Group according to hobbies • Went through the participants' 'creative learning' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning objectives need updating • Only 6 participants had done the creative learning – next time, tell participants' in advance we'll be looking at them as part of introductions - & if everyone has done them, do less time on introductions • For menstruation & sex exercise, discuss our own discomfort discussing menstruation, sex – not necessary to answer the question! |
| Friday 26.7.24 | | | | |
| 09.00 – 09.10 | Alex | Good morning etc | Thanks Berlin film,, Sign up for booth group, wifi working, waste recycling, acronyms flipchart, today's agenda – link with objectives | |

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|--|--|---|--|--|
| 09.00 – 11.20 | Caroline & Valentina of the Swedish RC | Menstruation | On-line, recorded PowerPoint presentation & facilitators on-line to answer questions | Unless generally more time available, limit depth of medical information. Would be better in person, but pre-recorded kept it to time. Great at answering questions |
| 11.25 – 11.50 | Suvechya | Market assessment | Overview in plenary, with PPT | Good introduction, more time needed, add 10 ‘ |
| 11.50 – 15.00 Incl lunch breaks | Suvechya | Online with sanitary pad producers in Nepal (disposable & reusable) Market assessment, | Group divided into 2; On-line chat with producers in Nepal | Interesting on-line sessions – maybe could be done out of the workshop. Need to have back-up plan if technology fails. More time needed to reflect on exercise and use the market assessment data? |
| 15.00 – 16.20 | Annie | Assessment: problem, target group, barriers & motivators | Plenary, small discussions, Q & A, brainstorm, using the guides, key points | Need more breaks Everyone should have a printed copy of the MHM guide in their hands Reinforce key points |
| 16.20 – 17.00 | Alex | Explanation & planning for next session: FGD & KII & Infrastructure check | Plenary with flipchart | Decided it was too much to do the infrastructure too, so only KII & FGD. Need to make time for Infrastructure- we could have included more about the disabled toilet access |
| 17.00 - end of evening | | Prep & conducting FGD & KII in Festival & setting up booth, getting a key message & | | Good the Festival staff could show the inside & talk about the red box of pads/tampons |

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|-------------------------|--------------|--|--|---|
| | | dinner in 2 groups – at participants own timing | | Practising FGDs & KII seemed to work well |
| Saturday 27.7.24 | | | | |
| 9.00 – 9.30 | Annie | | Pocket chart voting on feelings & content about yesterday | Good exercise, need 30' Need more feedback mechanisms Generally happy to practices theory, but 'lot of info' & 'hectic'; |
| 9.30 - | Alex | Infrastructure | Plenary, talked through list | Need to make time for practical on infrastructure |
| 10.05 – 11.30 | Anna | Review of previous evening's activities: lessons learnt & information gathered | Plenary, feedback, by group with flipcharts | Manage feedback, maybe when groups doing feedback, they just add to other groups info & not repeat |
| 11.30 – 11.45 | Break | | | |
| 11.45 – 12.15 | Alex | Setting objectives & planning | Plenary, with flipcharts & cards, based around material, info & facilities | This needs more time; don't get sucked into logframe terminology, but we need to be clear of importance of programme objective → if possible, let participants develop their own objectives |
| 12.15 -13.30 | Lunch | | | |
| 13.30 – 14.30 | Alex | M&E | Chart on floor with missing words | Great exercise! If more time, add more on putting it into practice, sharing experiences |
| 14.30 – 15.45 | Anna | Protection | Plenary Film: Oxfam, SaniTweaks PPT | Needs an hour Opportunity to better link with festival awareness concept |

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| | | | Film: IFRC | (→ referral mechanism) |
| 15.45 – 16.10 | Annie | Kits | Plenary; described different types of kits & terminology & menstrual items displayed on table | We could have spent more time on the menstrual items on the display table, better discussed earlier, in order to better prepare for discussions in the festival |
| 16.10 – 17.00 | Suvechya | CVA | Plenary, with cards | Good, covered the basics |
| Evening | Each facilitator supported a group | 4 groups: IEC Kits Dispenser Kobo survey | In the festival | Great activities, worked well. Next time, ensure groups well split up. Make sure there is a cut-off mechanism if things not going well – e.g. a FGD |
| Sunday 28.7.24 | | | | |
| 9.00 – 9.15 | Alex | Plan for the day | Plenary, flipchart | Photos from throughout the workshop: good for overview! |
| 09.15 – 10.00 | | Review of previous evening's activities | Group feedback | |
| 10.00 – 10.00 | Break | | | |
| 10.15 – 10.30 | | Participants' programme experience: Zambia & Syria | | |
| | | Group photo | | |
| 11.00 – 11.36 | Alex | Reflection, meditation exercise, talking through the whole workshop | | Worked well for getting people to quietly think through everything |
| 11.40 – 12.30 | | Reflection | | Participants were asked to share some of their reflection points in plenary (see typed notes) |

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|---------|--|------------|--|---|
| | | | | As short of time decided not to do the evaluation forms on site; only few completed later, so next time get them completed before people leave, maybe shorten survey by removing knowledge quiz |
| - 13.30 | | Packing up | | |