

THE PACHAMAMA PROJECT:

Creatively Addressing Human Rights to Water, Sanitation, and Gender Equality in Bolivia

International policy discourses on human rights now routinely address gender disparities in both education and health. Yet, despite these advances, the conversation often overlooks a significant site of inequity that brings together issues of gender, rights, education, and health: the hygienic management of menstruation (menstrual hygiene and management, or MHM). Although there is a clear connection between access to clean water and MHM, the topic is largely neglected by the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sector. Furthermore, even though a 2011 United Nations Report found that the stigma associated with menstruation is a root cause of discrimination and other rights violations, the human rights community has also paid scant attention to MHM when designing policies to advance girls' human rights.

The Pachamama Project is a human rights approach to menstrual hygiene management (MHM), a holistic strategy to integrating the safe and dignified handling of girl's menses, that seeks to increase gender equity, equal educational opportunities, and improve the realization of the human right to safe water in Cochabamba, Bolivia. I will investigate how MHM can be appropriately incorporated into girl's educational and physical environments in Cochabamba, Bolivia. In partnership with the organizations Fundación Cántaro Azul and Water for People, I will use interviews, community and school surveys, and facilitated discussion to identify culturally appropriate avenues for MHM education initiatives. I will also compile the information I gather regarding MHM into a Spanish, English, and Quechua language report for use as an educational tool by government agencies, NGOs, and community groups. By fostering community discussion, education, and participation in MHM activities, I hope that this project will enable structural change on the communities' terms, while broadening understandings of the human rights connections to water, sanitation, and gender equity. Because the combined issues of gender equality and access to clean water are not prominent on the international development agenda, MHM is likely to continue to be ignored as a priority unless practitioners make deliberate efforts to mainstream MHM into human rights and WASH based initiatives.

The Pachamama Project: Goals and Timeline

In its first year, the Pachamama Project will make key partnerships with communities, stakeholders, and schools in Cochabamba interested in improving MHM, create a report of current MHM issues translated into Spanish, Quechua, and English, and generate policy recommendations for Cántaro Azul and the municipal

government, local water committees, and parent-teacher associations working to improve water in schools. Numerous studies have found that community health education can bring significant changes in the awareness and behavior of adolescent girls regarding MHM (WaterAid 2012, UNICEF 2010). This project seeks to challenge the status quo by being inclusive about MHM, human rights, and water issues. Scholarship on international development has shown that projects targeting the health and inclusion of women and girls have a “multiplier effect” capable of breaking intergenerational poverty cycles (Baker 2000, Klasen 2000). Instead of focusing solely on technical or educational “solutions,” this project seeks to create a dynamic, interactive learning program that can inform understandings of the current state of MHM in Bolivia. The Pachamama Project values community driven assessment, and can adapt to local needs as the availability of educational outreach and community organizing is increased.

By May 2013, I will complete a thorough literature review of MHM and its related health, education, and equity issues. I will identify barriers that currently limit women and girls’ engagement in education, employment, and other activities to assess the scale of MHM issues while finalizing institutional arrangements with partner organizations. For ten weeks from May to August, I will go to Bolivia to meet with stakeholders and participants in MHM to discuss their roles.¹ I will first select project sites based on community interest in the project, then complete surveys in seventy households and eight schools (half rural, half peri-urban) within the Zona Sur region, which historically has had the lowest rates of access to water (23%) and sanitation (12%) according to a 2010 Water for People document. This number of households and schools is feasible based on the comparable number that I worked in last summer, and having roughly thirty-five households in two communities will provide sufficient sample sizes to gather meaningful data. Regarding survey content for both households and schools, I plan to assess both qualitative and quantitative factors related to MHM and WASH including the number of days that girls miss from school and additional barriers that a lack of MHM causes (See Appendix 3 for the draft survey).

Once the survey component of the project is complete around August 1, I will use the data to open conversations with key stakeholders in the community. Water for People and Fundación Cántaro Azul will connect

¹ This will include: school based (youth clubs, teachers, school caretakers), community (health workers, mother’s groups, soap and toilet paper suppliers), the private sector (construction companies, private health practitioners), the municipality (the Ministry of Water and Environment, municipal mayors, local water committees, the University of San Simon, Centro Agua), activist groups (Food and Water Watch and La Red Vida) and external supporters (UNICEF, Save the Children, other NGOs, and media sources).

me with people through their existing experience and involvement in the area. Based on the survey results and my conversations with community members, I will redesign existing WASH education curriculum to specifically include MHM; presently, WASH efforts by Water for People in these schools only involves hand washing. Finally, to elicit the perspectives of young people themselves, I will ask girls and boys in the schools to use disposable cameras to take photos of places they deem as safe or unsafe and use their photos to create a narrative for the community, local WASH organizations, and government officials. This creative part of the project includes community youth in telling their own story of how they are impacted by the lack of safe facilities. From September to November, I will return to Berkeley and engage in ongoing community discussion through Water for People with existing water committees and other local NGOs. From December to April 2014, I will compile my final report and share it with local government, NGOs, and schools to encourage further adoption of MHM. During this time, I will also seek additional funding and institutional and community support to continue the project in the future.

The intended outcomes and impact include integrating diverse perspectives of MHM and WASH to understand the current state of water and human rights, gender inequality, and health impacts associated with menstruation; improving understanding of MHM and WASH indicators in eight rural and peri-urban schools and three predominately migrant and indigenous communities; developing a Gender and Social Inclusion (GSI) Strategy to support and ensure a gender and social inclusion responsive approach that can be adopted by WASH-based organizations; gathering evidence that can contribute to understanding of the connections between weak human rights realization and poor access to water and sanitation, and health and education. I will share this information with the Berkeley community by presenting in water-based classes on campus, at Berkeley Water Group meetings, and WASH conferences. Indicators for success and impact will be diversified to include quantitative (number of schools, children, and communities served; number of improved water sources; number of health clinics with educational information on MHM) and qualitative (participant observations for the use of educational and health materials; interviews with NGO members for project feedback) data. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will occur through Cántaro Azul and Water for People's role as project supporters by integrating community feedback into the project.

I do expect to encounter challenges with this project. Consistent with what the UNICEF report on MHM among girls in Bolivian schools found, I expect that a main obstacle for the project will be women and girls who are unwilling to talk about MHM. However, Cántaro Azul and Water for People have a wealth of knowledge about WASH issues in schools, giving this project an advantage in its ability to implement its initiatives, secure ongoing institutional support, and achieve lasting impact.

Qualifications

After spending ten weeks in Cochabamba last summer working as a partner with Water for People, I believe that I am well prepared to carry out this project. My courses of study for my dual majors in Society and Environment (B.Sc.) and International Development and Economics (B.A.) and minor in Global Poverty and Practice have also prepared me for this project. Additionally while I was in Cochabamba, I completed field work on peri-urban water access in marginalized indigenous and migrant communities for my B.Sc. honors thesis. I founded and co-facilitate a DeCal on water and international human rights and am President of the Berkeley Water Group, an interdisciplinary lab focused on the intersection of water, technology, and development. I lead a student project that implements low cost UV water treatment systems in rural communities in Mexico, which received 2nd place in the Big Ideas competition last year. I am comfortable communicating in Spanish about the complex topics this project entails. I have also applied for the Foreign Language Scholarship to study Quechua to enhance my ability to communicate with people. My faculty mentor, Dr. Isha Ray, will be a principal resource for this project given her academic and professional background in water, gender, and poverty. I am also confident about my personal safety while working in the city due to my prior experience there, and will live with the same host family that I stayed with last summer.

BUDGET

BUDGET CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION & ITEMIZATION	ITEM TOTAL	CATEGORY SUBTOTAL
Travel			\$1945
	Airfare - Based on current projections of flight costs to Cochabamba from Oakland through La Paz on vayama.com	\$1200	
	Ground transportation - Based on previous costs for transit (buses, taxis) within Cochabamba. Cost varies for private taxis (around \$2-8 per ride) while buses operate at flat fees of about \$1 per ride.	\$300	
	Room and board (food included)- Based on cost of living with home stay family in Cochabamba for ten weeks with three meals per day	\$1600	
	Awarded \$1000 from the Center for Race and Gender to support this project	-\$1000	

	Awarded \$1000 from the College of Natural Resources for this project	-\$1000	
	Conference – attend and present results at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill Water and Health Conference, October 14-18, 2013. Price based on round trip airfare (\$600) and conference registration fee (\$245) (http://whconference.unc.edu/)	\$845	
Equipment			\$185
	Digital audio recorder for recording interviews– based on the average cost of a high quality recorder on Amazon.com (http://www.amazon.com/Digital-Voice-Recorders-Audio-Video/b?ie=UTF8&node=227758)	\$50	
	Digital camera with video for including high quality images in the final report– PowerShot 16.0 MP, 720p HD video recording, based on cost of camera on Amazon.com	\$135	
Supplies			\$240
	Disposable cameras - For the activity in schools; based on \$3/camera for 80 groups of children at 8 different schools	\$240	
Services			\$1964
	Surveys/questionnaires/report printing - Cost of printing 500 pages for the reports at the University of San Simon copy center	\$300	
	Small thank you gifts for survey recipients (\$10/item x 70 surveys)	\$700	
	Internet access - Based on cost of Viva internet cards and modem, needed for internet research and contacting partners when internet cafés are unavailable (http://www.vivagsm.com/3g/3-5g-usb)	\$500	
	Film development - For 80 cameras, estimated cost of \$4/camera to develop film based on the costs encountered last summer	\$320	
	Health travel consult/ immunizations at the Tang Center - Covers the cost of any booster shots (tetanus, rabies) needed as well as a meeting with health professionals regarding personal health care and safety	\$144	
	Travel insurance - Free for UC Berkeley students doing campus affiliated work; includes disaster medical insurance	\$0	
Other			\$435
	Visa - Information available from US Department of State visa information page (http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1069.html)	\$135	
	Incidentals - For unexpected minor expenses, such as medicine if I become sick, additional day trips for interviews via bus, notebooks and writing supplies	\$300	
TOTAL			\$4769

Budget narrative

I was awarded \$1000 in October 2012 from the UC Berkeley Center for Race and Gender to go toward covering the cost of my airfare. I also received a \$1000 grant in February 2013 from the College of Natural Resources to support the project. I have applied for a Foreign Language/Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship to study Quechua as well, which I would apply to improving my Quechua language skills while in the field. I intend to apply for an Institute of International Studies conference grant as well to attend and present at the UNC Chapel Hill Water and Health conference, which I presented at in 2012 with aid from a grant from the Center for the Study of Social Change. The project has also received support from <http://www.girleffect.org/> which wrote an article about the project titled “Why Clean Water is Key to Keeping Girls in School.”