Today, millions of women and girls around the world are stigmatised, excluded and discriminated against because they menstruate, hugely impacting their education. Due to period poverty and stigma, girls can be denied access to education and face extreme bullying and gender-based violence in and around schools. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 500 million women and girls worldwide already lacked basic needs to manage their menstruation and the pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges. *Your action is needed!*  

### MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AROUND THE WORLD

In **Venezuela**, women are forced to turn to the black market for period products because extreme hyperinflation has increased the price of tampons by 1800%!

In **Canada**, 70% of women say they’ve missed school or work because of their period.

In **Uganda**, girls miss up to 8 days of study each school term because they have their periods.

In **the USA**, 64% of women reported ever having difficulty affording menstrual products, such as pads, tampons, or reusable products like menstrual cups.

In **Nepal**, women are banished to huts during menstruation because the community perceives them as “impure.”

### SCOTLAND: A SHINING EXAMPLE!

There are some strong global leaders emerging in the fight against period poverty. In 2020, Scotland became the first country to make period products universally free! The Scottish Government is doing this in an effort to fight period poverty and inspire other countries around the world to follow suit.

### TAKE ACTION!

About half of schools in low-income countries lack the adequate drinking water, sanitation and hygiene crucial for girls and female teachers to manage their period. Inadequate facilities can affect girls’ experience at school, causing them to miss school during their period. All schools should provide:

- **A supportive social environment**
  - Don’t restrict access to Menstrual Hygiene management
  - Encourage communication to end taboos and stigma
  - Be an ally / Be considerate and empathetic

- **Education**
  - Teach girls and boys about the menstrual cycle
  - Educate about sexual and reproductive health and puberty
  - Explain how to deal with physical and mental effects

- **WASH services**
  - Provide access to cheap/free menstrual products
  - Ensure access to water and adequate sanitary facilities

Sources: Citron Hygiene / Farid / Girls Helping Girls. Period. / UNESCO / UNICEF

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Graduate Women International (GWI)
Empowering women and girls through lifelong education since 1919

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#PeriodsAreNotBad  #StopPeriodTaboo  #MHMEducation
GWI calls on states to make menstrual hygiene products affordable and accessible. Ideally, period products should be free for everyone in all spaces. Eliminating a tax on period products, commonly referred to as “tampon tax,” is a medial step that governments can take immediately.

Many countries have shown it is possible to eliminate this biased tax, including Canada, Australia, Kenya, India, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Tanzania, Lebanon, Malaysia, Colombia, South Africa, Namibia, and Rwanda.

Source: International Institute for Sustainable Development

GWI RESOLUTIONS

Every three years the GWI General Assembly adopts new resolutions to guide the international advocacy of our National Federations and Associations (NFAs) towards women and girls’ education and empowerment.

Through their implementation, the GWI resolutions empower women and girls to achieve higher levels of education and professional goals. The next GWI General Assembly is in November 2022!

2019 - No. 3: SRH Education as a Human Right for All
2004 - No. 10: Protection of Water
2001 - No. 3: Education for Establishing a Society of Gender Equality
1998 - No. 1: Right to Education
1995 - No. 1: Adolescents
No. 5: Health Education
1992 - No. 4: Girl’s Self-Esteem

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The mental burden, as well as psychological and physical pain due to menstruation must be addressed to ensure good menstrual hygiene management.

Period-friendly schools provide students with an environment that increase concentration, learning, and school attendance, which leads to empowerment through opportunity.

Societal taboos around menstruation result in neglect of menstrual hygiene needs and unjustly fuel gender discrimination, inequality and patriarchal practices.

To manage menstruation in privacy and dignity, women and girls need water and sanitation facilities that are safe and where they can safely dispose of menstrual products.

Source: The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies

"Stigma around menstruation and menstrual hygiene is a violation of several human rights, most importantly of the right to human dignity".

Jyoti Sanghera
Section Chief of Human Rights and Economic and Social Issues
Office of the of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

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This infographic was created by GWI Executive Director, Stacy Orly Lara and GWI Programme and Projects Officer, Alexa Grace © 2022 Graduate Women International