

“Poor menstrual hygiene can lead to many health hazards for women, so it is important to teach every girl menstrual hygiene and give her the right menstrual products... Respect menstruation and give the girl the right knowledge at the right time.”

Swati Bedecker, Indian Federation of University Women
[To view Swati's short video click HERE.](#)

Every day 800 million women around the world have their period. The average woman will spend 3,000 days menstruating in their lifetime. Still today, millions of women and girls around the world are stigmatised and discriminated against because they menstruate, **which severely impacts their education.**

Period poverty, the lack of access to menstrual hygiene products and resources, is a global issue affecting millions of women and girls. It impedes their education, health, and dignity. Due to period poverty and stigma, girls can be denied access to education, face inexcusable bullying and gender-based violence in and around schools. Too many girls and women have been forced to sacrifice school and/or work because they can't afford to manage their periods safely. **Awareness-raising and action are needed!**

We invite you to look for the five short video clips from GWI members included in this infographic on Menstrual Hygiene Day! Look for the flower.



Menstrual Hygiene Concerns Across the Globe

Menstrual Health and Hygiene is essential to the well-being and education of women and adolescent girls. An estimated 500 million lack access to menstrual products and adequate facilities for menstrual hygiene management.

- More than half of women in Bangladesh said they did not participate in everyday activities while menstruating.
- Mexico City (2021) banned the use plastic applicators. With a lack of access to tampons, women and girls are more at risk of missing more school.
- A 2021 survey of 671 school-age girls in Japan showed that only 82.9% could afford sanitary product; 37% reported changing pads and tampons less often due to that financial difficulties.
- Data revealed in 2022 that some seven million South African girls struggle to access sanitary products.
- In India, it was found that a quarter of the girls did not attend school during menstruation because of the lack of adequate toilets.
- A Bolivia study (2022) among 450 girls, women, & men revealed that 90% didn't know about menstruation; 70% of youth miss school because they don't have access to sanitary supplies.

Sources: UNICEF, Borgen Project, World Bank

Scotland, France, and Nepal: Leading by Example!

France has launched a pilot program which offers free products for students, placing dispensers on campuses throughout the country.

Scotland became the first country in the world which provides tampons and sanitary pads free of charge in 2020.

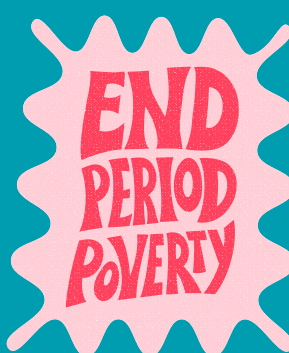
Nepal also distributes free sanitary pads in schools with the hope of reducing absenteeism.

What GWI NFAs have to say about menstrual hygiene:

"Menstruation is a fact of life, but many girls around the world do not have a good experience because of different reasons, together let's join hands and make sure girls know how to take care of their bodies during this important time".

Linda Williams,
 President
 Sierra Leone
 Association of
 University Women

To view Linda's short video click [HERE](#).

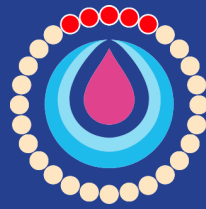


Menstrual
 + Hygiene
 + is a
 Human
 Right

"I believe that every woman and girl deserves the menstrual hygiene management education that empowers her to fully participate in society and live a healthy life. I believe that this should be an essential part of school curriculum and education across the globe to achieve the [UN SDG] agenda by 2030, where no one is left behind because of menstruation".

Sudha Srivastava, President
 GWI Young Member Network

To view Sudha's short video click [HERE](#).



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

Supportive social environment

A supportive social environment requires establishing better access to Menstrual Hygiene Management resources, encouraging communication to help end taboos and stigma, and always being a considerate and empathic ally to those you know who menstruate.

Education

Education must become more inclusive of menstruation, which means teaching girls and boys about the menstrual cycle, properly explaining how to deal with menstruation's physical and mental effects, and educating more about sexual and reproductive health and puberty.

WASH services

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) must be provided, meaning access to affordable or even free menstrual products. They provide access to water and adequate sanitary facilities.



What are GWI NFAs doing for Menstrual Hygiene Management ?

→ **Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) Strathcona and Perth (Ontario) assembled hundreds of menstrual hygiene kits.**

The Days for Girls Sask-Alberta branch raised the funds to purchase the fabric. Members sewed the liners and acquired the soaps, women's briefs, and face cloths to enclose with the kits. Over the last four years they have distributed over 450 kits. **CFUW Perth in Ontario** raised awareness of the issue and launched a donation drive. Members collected donations of pads, tampons, menstrual cups, and period underwear. Some 160 pounds of menstrual hygiene items were distributed through the local food bank. **To hear more from Barb DuMoulin, CFUW Vice President International Relations, about CFUW projects click [HERE](#).**



→ **In 2022, the Ghana Association of University Women (GAUW) voluntarily donated sanitary pads to 120 school girls.**

In deprived areas surrounding the University of Cape Coast, this was necessitated by the news that girls from deprived areas were exchanging sex for sanitary pads because they could not afford it. On 29 May 2023 this association is organizing a menstrual hygiene education seminar for 140 school girls from 7 public schools in deprived areas in Cape coast." - Dr. Cynthia Adinortey, Ghana Association of University Women. **To learn more about GAUW's contribution to ending period poverty from Dr Rosemary Quarcoo, click [HERE](#).**

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

"Make menstruation a normal fact of life by 2030"

#WeAreCommitted



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
The mental burden, as well as psychological and physical pain due to menstruation must be addressed to ensure good menstrual hygiene management.



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



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



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
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.

HOW CAN YOU HELP? TAKE ACTION!

- Contribute to education!** Schools play a vital role in providing knowledge, facilities where it is safe to manage menstruation and more.
- Advocate for Menstrual Equity!** This can be done by supporting NGOs that have projects that directly help to solve period poverty and menstrual health disparities across
- Help to end the stigma!** Make the conversation of menstruation, menstrual health, and period poverty normal in your conversations.