

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY



Graduate Women International (GWI)

28 MAY 2026



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DID YOU KNOW?

Menstrual Hygiene Day, or MH Day, is a global awareness day held every year on 28 May to break stigma and raise action on menstrual health and hygiene. It was initiated by WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) United and first observed in 2014, and its mission is to create a [#PeriodFriendlyWorld](#) where menstruation is accepted as a normal fact of life.

Graduate Women International (GWI) is a longstanding Menstrual Hygiene Day partner and actively supports global efforts advancing menstrual health, education, dignity, and informed dialogue for girls and women. Through previous MH Day campaigns, GWI has contributed advocacy materials and awareness initiatives addressing stigma, education barriers, and menstrual health awareness, including the [GWI 2023 MH Day infographic](#).

SOURCE: MH DAY

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FAST FACTS




**MORE THAN
500 MILLION
WOMEN AND GIRLS
LACK THE
RESOURCES TO
MANAGE
MENSTRUATION.**




**2.1 BILLION WOMEN
AND GIRLS
MENSTRUATE
WORLDWIDE.**



**15% OF WOMEN
AND GIRLS IN LOW-
AND MIDDLE-
INCOME COUNTRIES
MISS WORK,
SCHOOL, OR SOCIAL
ACTIVITIES DURING
MENSTRUATION.**



GWI OUTREACH
**GWI ADVOCATES TO
END MENSTRUAL
STIGMA AND
PROMOTE INFORMED
PUBLIC
UNDERSTANDING OF
MENSTRUATION.**



GWI OUTREACH
**ADVOCACY
INFOGRAPHICS AND
DIGITAL OUTREACH**
**EDUCATION PROJECTS
AND AWARENESS
INITIATIVES**
**UNITED NATIONS
AGENCY WRITTEN
STATEMENTS**

SOURCE: MH DAY FACTSHEET, GWI

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8 EMERGING TRENDS

The upcoming section introduces eight emerging trends linked to the theme of Menstrual Hygiene Day, Together for a **#PeriodFriendlyWorld**. They reflect a shift toward rights-based approaches that prioritize dignity, inclusion, and systemic change. Increasingly, progress depends on education and policy integration.

Together, these trends highlight the importance of cross-sector collaboration, sustainable solutions, and the recognition of menstrual health as a public education and gender equality issue.

These emerging trends build on themes identified in the [2025 MH Day advocacy materials by GWI](#), including economic sustainability of period products and approaches to menstrual health.

SOURCE: MH DAY

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1. GROWING GLOBAL ADVOCACY AND VISIBILITY

Menstrual health is increasingly recognized as a visible global issue, moving beyond private or local concerns. The movement has grown rapidly in recent years, with MH Day helping to bring menstruation into public conversations on gender equality, health, education, and human rights. This shift empowers women and girls to speak about periods more openly and challenge stigma. In its [2018 Human Rights Council Statement](#), GWI emphasizes menstrual hygiene as a matter of dignity, reducing taboo and continued access to education.

SOURCE: MH DAY, GWI

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2. INCREASED GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Public funding for menstrual hygiene and health is increasing, but it is still far from adequate. From 2018 to 2025, US\$635 million was committed to Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH). In addition, 29 national and sub-national governments allocated more than US\$1 million toward free or subsidized menstrual products. Continued investment and policy attention remain important to sustain progress and improve access.

SOURCE: MH DAY

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3. POLITICAL AND LEGAL RECOGNITION

More governments are beginning to treat menstrual health as a policy priority rather than a side issue. In recent years, countries have introduced stand-alone MHH policies or included menstrual health in broader health, WASH, education, and gender policies. Recent legal and policy wins include India's Supreme Court recognition of menstrual health and hygiene as a fundamental right, as well as national guideline launches in Scotland, Uganda, and Nigeria.

SOURCE: MH DAY

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4. EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS ARE SCALING UP

Evidence in the fact sheet shows that school-based education can improve knowledge, attitudes, confidence, and hygiene behaviour, which makes education one of the most effective long-term investments. There is growing recognition that menstruation education needs to start early and be delivered consistently. The [GWI 2024 MH Day infographic](#) provides relevant and useful information for advocacy efforts related to menstrual education, access to menstrual products, and school participation worldwide.

SOURCE: MH DAY, GWI

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5. MENSTRUAL HEALTH SERVICES RECEIVE MORE ATTENTION

Policy discussions are increasingly expanding the focus beyond access to products and toilets to include menstrual pain, heavy bleeding, and access to care. More than 70% of menstruating women and girls experience painful periods, and at least 10% are affected by heavy menstrual bleeding. This shift reflects a broader understanding that menstrual health also encompasses medical treatment, pain management, and access to care, all of which can influence educational participation and daily life.

SOURCE: MH DAY

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6. AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESS TO MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS

Access to menstrual products remains one of the biggest barriers to dignity and education. Nearly 400 million women and girls in low- and middle-income countries use unhygienic materials, such as old cloths, during their periods. Even in high-income countries, 10–25% struggle to afford products. At the same time, more countries are removing or reducing taxes on menstrual products and introducing free or subsidized distribution schemes, showing that affordability is becoming a stronger policy priority.

SOURCE: MH DAY

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7. INFRASTRUCTURE IS BECOMING MORE PERIOD- FRIENDLY

More attention is being paid to whether toilets and school facilities actually support menstruation with privacy, water, and safe disposal. More than 170 million women and girls do not have access to a toilet, and more than 270 million share facilities with other households, which makes privacy, hygiene and school attendance difficult. In response, institutions are beginning to invest in period-friendly toilets, disposal systems, and school WASH improvements.

SOURCE: MH DAY

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8. DATA, MONITORING, AND RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI) EVIDENCE

Consistent use of data and economic evidence is strengthening the case for action on menstrual health. Evidence, for instance, funding trackers or ROI data, matters because it helps decision-makers see menstrual health not as a small hygiene issue, but as an investment in education, productivity, wellbeing, and gender equality. Consistent monitoring improves accountability and makes it easier to argue for sustained funding and smarter policies.

SOURCE: MH DAY

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CONCLUSION

These eight trends demonstrate meaningful progress, as the conversation shifts toward rights, access, and practical solutions. Still, millions of women and girls continue to **lack the products, education, sanitation facilities, and services** needed to manage menstruation with dignity. Progress remains uneven, with strong commitment and also significant gaps, particularly for those affected by poverty, discrimination, or weak infrastructure. Greater impact depends on strengthened institutional commitment, comprehensive education systems, and inclusive policies that address menstrual health as a fundamental aspect of public health and gender equality. Advancing this agenda requires continued investment in **evidence-based education**, the integration of **menstrual health into school curricula**, and coordinated **action across sectors** to ensure equitable access.

SOURCE: MH DAY

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