

WATER SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

Measuring Progress on Menstruation for Girls in 2019

PURPOSE

In March 2019, multi-sectoral researchers, practitioners, and monitoring and evaluation specialists convened to identify priority indicators across key areas within global health and development, and assess alignment of the identified priority indicators with interventions addressing menstruation. The focus was on the menstruation-related issues impacting girls in and out of school, given the strong potential links between Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) policy and outcomes.

The result of this meeting was a green paper entitled “**Monitoring Menstrual Health and Hygiene**”, and a series of sector-themed one-page highlight documents, including this one focused on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH).

BACKGROUND

The ‘menstrual movement’ is rapidly evolving, and there is a need for collaboration and consensus to assess progress for holistic MHH policy that can improve girls’ learning and life outcome, and to identify opportunities for linking with other measurement efforts at national and global levels. This includes aligning menstruation with the priority areas of education, gender, WASH, psychosocial health, and sexual and reproductive health (SRH). Validated, rigorous measures are needed across levels of investment in relation to menstruation.

HOW MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE RELATES TO WASH

Girls, women and all individuals who menstruate must have an enabling environment for managing menstruation. This includes the provision and maintenance of the required infrastructure and services for managing menstruation. Specifically, this includes the provision and maintenance of water at hand-washing and bathing facilities, and sanitation facilities that are private, accessible, clean and safe; and accurate and pragmatic menstrual hygiene behavior change communication delivered, for example, by hygiene promoters. The enabling environment may include having sufficient numbers of female-friendly and sex- (or gender-) separated toilets in schools, situating water points close to toilets for washing hands, body and stains from clothes, ensuring adequate privacy for changing and washing menstrual cloths and pads, supplying adequate soap and hand-washing facilities, and investing in culturally appropriate disposal mechanisms, including systems of waste management that are environmentally-friendly, for used menstrual products and materials.

HOW MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE RELATES TO WASH

A poor WASH environment can negatively impact school participation, increase vulnerability to urogenital infections, increase blockage of sanitation systems, and reduce safety.

ALIGNMENT OF WASH IMPACT MEASURES WITH MHH

An analysis was conducted to examine if and how MHH monitoring and evaluation efforts contribute or could contribute to the priorities within each of the five areas, and to map out where connections or overlaps exist.

The top three priorities identified as relevant were: availability of female friendly WASH facilities in schools; ability to manage MHH specific needs at home; and acceptability of WASH MHH facilities in institutional settings.

Missing measures, or those in need of further development, were also identified. For WASH this included capturing confidence using facilities during menstruation.

LINKS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



In addition, menstruation and MHH were identified as relevant to achieving the following WASH-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDG): SDG5 (gender equality), SDG6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG11 (sustainable cities and communities), SDG12 (responsible production and consumption), and SDG15 (life on land).

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