Measuring the Influences of School WASH-based MHM interventions on adolescent girls’ Educational Engagement in Accra, Ghana

The GAMA* Sanitation & Water Project

Menstrual hygiene management (MHM) refers to the process of handling menstruation. Without good MHM, adolescent girls may struggle to attend school during menstruation. Good MHM consists of the following elements:

1. **Knowledge**: Knowledge of puberty, menstruation, and how to practice good menstrual hygiene. Menstruation is normal, not an illness.
2. **Sanitary Products**: Clean materials to absorb or collect menstrual blood. Clean, re-usable cloth (or Self-efficacy and WASH facilities), tampons or menstrual cups.
3. **WASH Facilities**: Private & clean toilet facilities to change sanitary products. Latrines with locked doors, light and space. Appropriate waste disposal facility for soiled materials and used sanitary products.
4. **Pain management**: Water and soap, for personal hygiene and rinsing menstrual blood. Clean materials to absorb or collect menstrual blood. Tampons or menstrual cups.

Ghana faces significant challenges with Menstrual Hygiene Management. 11.5 million girls lack access to waste disposal facilities, and only 62% have adequate waste disposal facilities. 2.5 million women lack access to private and clean WASH facilities in public spaces to manage menstruation.

Impact in education

- **Primary schools**: 1.9 million girls have inadequate water supply systems; only 75% have accessible water supply systems.
- **Secondary schools**: Only 39% have adequate water supply systems.

Coordinated investment in infrastructure and education are essential to address the lack of water and sanitation infrastructure in public spaces, specifically in schools.

WASH facilities and MHM self-efficacy (or Self-efficacy and WASH facilities)

The role of school management is critical to ensuring access to resources for sanitation, providing teacher training on this sensitive topic, and oversight and monitoring of MHM education.

**Facilitation of adequate menstrual hygiene management**

- **Material resources**: Clean, re-usable cloth (or Self-efficacy and WASH facilities), tampons or menstrual cups.
- **Facilities for personal hygiene**: Materials to absorb or collect menstrual blood.
- **Waste disposal**: Latrines with locked doors, light and space.

**MHM is knowledge of and access to materials and facilities for proper management of menstrual hygiene**

**Findings and Recommendations**

Access to private and clean WASH facilities can impact a post-menarche girls’ level of engagement in school.

**Good MHM and WASH interventions must be integrated into school curricula to increase access to education for girls**

**Lack of adequate WASH facilities in schools to promote good menstrual hygiene practices can act as a barrier to education, engagement in sports and associated development affecting gender equality**

**School environments inhibits female students and teachers to manage their menstruation with safety, dignity, and privacy. This can negatively influence socio-emotional indicators such as self-esteem, self-efficacy and eventually inability to succeed and thrive within and outside the school environment.**

**MMH-centered WASH facilities and improved behavior and educational interventions are necessary to break the cycle of gender inequality in schools**

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*Greater Accra Metropolitan Area*