

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

The GAMA* Sanitation & Water Project

*Greater Accra Metropolitan Area

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:



MHM Knowledge:

Knowledge about menstruation, puberty and how to practice good MHM.

Menstruation is normal, not an illness.
Body-development in puberty.
Feeling self-confident, freedom from shame.
How to deal with menstruation, both fluids and pain.



Sanitary Products:

Clean materials to absorb or collect menstrual blood.

Clean re-usable cloth
Disposable ready-made sanitary pads, tampons or menstrual cups.



WASH facilities:

Private & clean toilet facilities to change sanitary materials as often as necessary.

Latrines with locked doors, light and space.

Water and soap. Body hygiene & washing cloths

Appropriate disposal facility for soiled materials. For used cloth or sanitary pads.

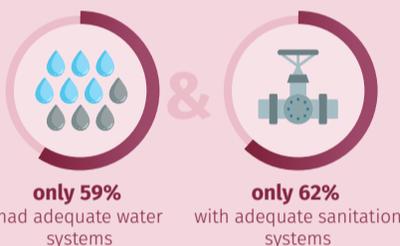
Ghana is one of the countries facing the biggest challenges with Menstrual Hygiene Management

Despite the government's efforts, **public schools do not retain girls in school at the junior high level** due to the learning challenges, social environments and physical conditions that prevail.



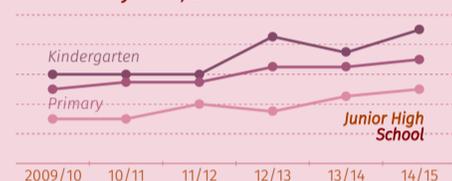
Impact in education

Primary schools



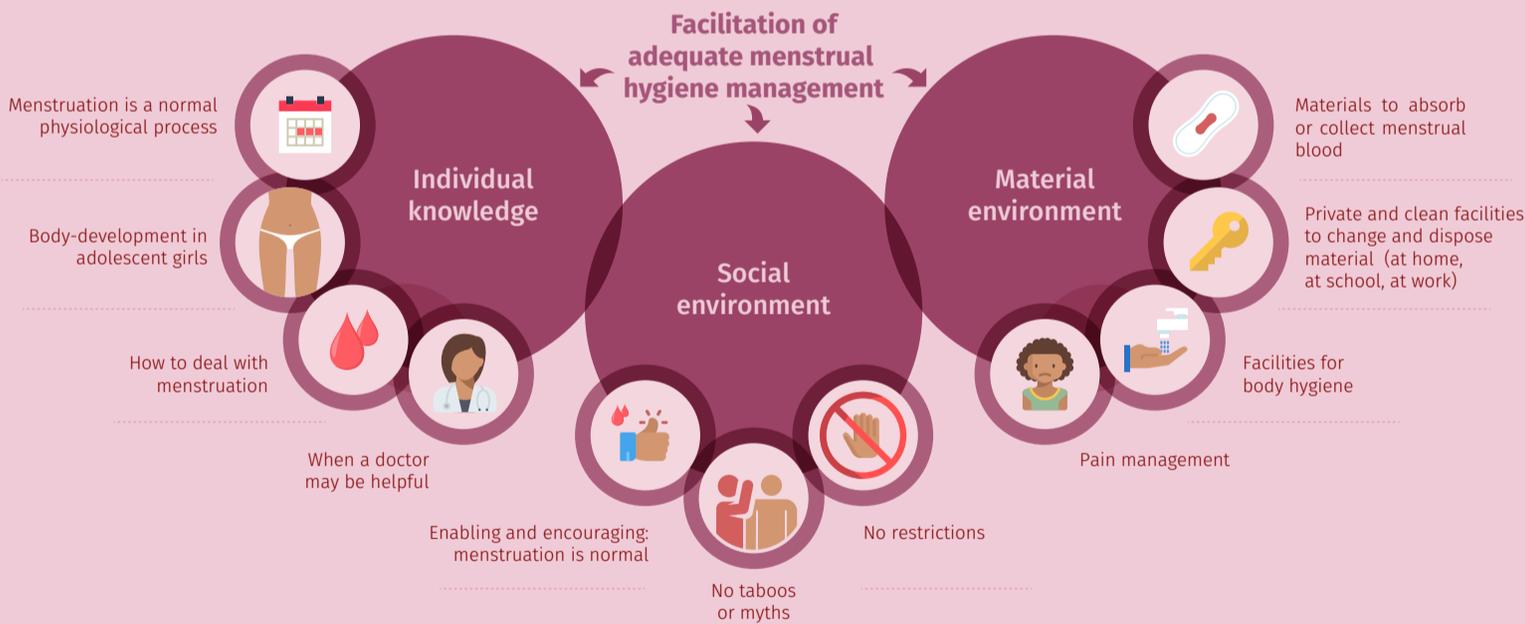
Investment in infrastructure and education are essential to address the lack of WASH infrastructure in public spaces, specifically in schools

Gender Parity Index, Basic Schools Ghana



MHM Self-Efficacy with WASH facilities

Model of Knowledge, environment and facilities for Menstrual Hygiene Management-WASH



Lack of MHM resources may hinder educational engagement in girls

They tend to feel shameful and uncomfortable and this then leads to negative long-term side-effects on educational and health outcomes

MHM is the knowledge of and access to materials and facilities for proper management of menstrual hygiene for women and girls post-menarche

Education is an important factors in poverty alleviation, especially for women and girls

More attention should be placed on identifying and addressing the challenges girls face in schools, such as socio-emotional factors impacting self-esteem and self-efficacy

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 ability to succeed and thrive within and outside the school environment.



Findings and Recommendations

Accessibility, privacy and cleanliness of WASH infrastructure can impact a post-menarche girl's school engagement

In order to increase access to education for girls this must include integrating school curriculum and WASH school interventions with good MHM practices

Lack of proper school WASH facilities in the context of promoting MHM practices can serve as a barrier to education, engagement in sports and associated development, contributing to gender inequity

To break the cycle of gender inequity, community-conscious WASH infrastructure and behavior interventions combined with educational interventions regarding MHM-WASH practices are necessary

