PERIODS DON’T STOP FOR PANDEMICS

VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON COVID-19 AND MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Through U-Report, we asked 3,910 girls and young women from 160 countries on how their periods have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is what they told us:

1 IN 4 are finding it harder to manage their periods during COVID-19 compared to before the pandemic. Most of these countries are facing lockdowns where schools, health centres and community centres are closed. COVID-19 has made it more difficult in the following ways:

- Find it harder to get menstrual materials: 47%
- Find it more difficult to get pain relief: 23%
- Find it harder to talk about periods with the people they live with: 14%
- Have less privacy or access to safe toilets: 6%
- Can only talk openly about periods with very close people: 51%
- Can talk to no one at all about their periods: 12%

Access to menstrual materials during the pandemic is the key challenge.

- 51% have less money to buy them
- 29% have less menstrual materials available where they live
- 5% said they are embarrassed to ask for them in their current circumstances
- 5% changed from disposable to reusable materials

The majority of the young women and girls live in situations where periods are a taboo causing shame and stigma. This limits access to knowledge and emotional support.

Girls and young women want their countries to act to overcome period poverty, shame and stigma.

- 37% of girls and young women believe their countries should provide free menstrual products
- 14% want period pain relief to be accessible
- 29% want their countries to provide period education to everyone
- 13% want safe toilets everywhere

We call on global leaders to invest in period education and action to end period poverty and period stigma as a core component of COVID-19 response and recovery plans to respond to the needs of young people and all generations. #ItsTimeForAction

For #MHDay2020 WAGGGS and WASH United launched a U-Report poll to learn more about young people’s experiences when it comes to menstruation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The poll was co-designed with Girl Guides from 10 different countries, to ensure it was youth-friendly and relevant in the context of their new life circumstances. 9,374 people answered the poll, of which 3910 (42%) were girls and young women aged 13-25 years old.

The poll results have representation from 160 countries, with Argentina and Democratic Republic of Congo recording the highest number of respondents.

For any data enquiries, please contact Ines.Goncalves@wagggs.org

For the full results, visit https://ureport.in/opinion/4235/