



About Menstrual Hygiene Day (MH Day)

- MH Day is celebrated annually on 28 May to symbolize the average length of the menstrual cycle (28) and duration of menstruation (5).
- It was initiated by WASH United and was first celebrated in 2014. [WASH United](#) is an award-winning non-profit based in Berlin/Germany, founded in 2011, with a focus on menstrual health and hygiene (MHH). WASH United focuses on strengthening the global MHH ecosystem by offering free, easy-to-use solutions for awareness, advocacy, and education, and engages in strategic advocacy throughout the year.
- The mission of the MH Day movement is to create a period-friendly world.

A period-friendly world is a world in which menstruation is accepted as a normal fact of life and is no longer stigmatised. It is a world in which everyone is educated about menstruation from an early age. In a period-friendly world, everyone has access to quality and affordable period products of their choice. Everyone has access to period-friendly toilets. And in a period-friendly world, menstrual health services are available to everyone. It is a world where no one is held back just because they menstruate. ([MH Day mission](#))

- The impact of MH Day 2025: reach of 971 million people, 25,026 pieces of media coverage, 198,132 social media contributions, more than 2,000 events, and 1,350 partner organizations.

About Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH)

Global perspective of menstruation

- Globally, 2.1 billion adolescent girls and women menstruate. (WHO/ UNICEF, [Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2024](#). JMP, 2025)
- On any given day, approximately 375 million women and girls worldwide are menstruating. (Own calculation)

MHH-related challenges

- Number of persons in need: More than 500 million women do not have the resources and support that they need to manage their menstruation. (Amaya L. et al., [Advancing Gender Equity by Improving Menstrual Health](#). FSG, 2020)
- Period education: Globally, only around 2 out of 5 schools provide menstruation education. (WHO/ UNICEF, [Progress on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene in schools, 2015-2023](#). JMP, 2024)

Millions of girls around the world are unaware or unprepared before having their first period. (UNICEF, [10 fast facts about MHH in schools](#), 2024)

Among women and girls of reproductive age, the overall correct knowledge on menstrual health ranges between 35.6% and 57.3%.

(Hansen et al., [Empowering Women Through Knowledge: A Systematic Review of Literature on Menstrual and Reproductive Health Literacy](#). Health Equity, 2025)

- **Access to menstrual products:** 378 million women and girls in low- and middle-income countries use old cloths, tissue paper, or other unhygienic materials during their periods.
(Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition, [Landscape and Projection of Reproductive Health Supply Needs](#), 2024)
In high-income countries, between 10-25 % of women and girls of reproductive age struggle to afford period products. (Based on individual country surveys)
- **Period-friendly toilets:** More than 170 million women and girls worldwide do not have access to a toilet, and more than 270 million share facilities with other households.
(WHO/ UNICEF, [Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2024](#). JMP, 2025)
- **Menstrual health services:** Globally, more than 70% of menstruating women and girls experience painful periods.
(De Arruda G.T. et al., [Worldwide prevalence of dysmenorrhea: a systematic review and meta-analysis across 70 countries](#). International Association for the Study of Pain, 2026)
Heavy menstrual bleeding affects at least 10% of women and girls.
(Maganti A. et al., [The prevalence of heavy menstrual bleeding: a systematic review](#). The Lancet Obstetrics, Gynaecology & Women's Health, 2026)
- **Period-friendly social environment:** Stigma related to menstruation remains widespread, with millions of women and girls feeling ashamed or unable to openly discuss the topic.
Note: There is no global consolidated figure available, as it differs widely by context.
- **Menstrual-related absenteeism:** Overall, 15% of women and girls in low- and middle-income countries are absent from work, school, or social activities during their menstruation.
(Starr M. et al., [Epidemiology of menstrual-related absenteeism in 44 low-income and middle-income countries: a cross-sectional analysis of Multiple Indicator Cluster surveys](#). The Lancet Global Health, 2025)
Around 1 in 4 girls worldwide is absent from school when she has her period. Note: The figure is a pooled prevalence. The available data differs widely by context and study, ranging from below 1 out of 10 to 7 out of 10 girls.
(Zaman et al., [Prevalence and contributing factors of menstruation-related absenteeism among schoolgirls: a systematic review meta-analysis](#). The Open Nursing Journal, 2025)
- **Funding:** The accumulated amount committed to MHH from 2018 to 2025 stands at US\$ 635.18 million (based on 40 entries for dedicated and earmarked budgets of above US\$ 1 million). This equals to 18 cents per person in need/year or under 2 cents per person in need/month, which is highly inadequate. (WASH United, [MHH Funding Tracker Insight Brief](#). 2026)
- **The economic impact:** hundreds of billions of dollars each year are lost to the economy, resulting from women and girls missing out on education and job opportunities because of their menstruation. In the European Union, the estimated annual economic loss is more than 107 billion Euros.
(Kaerney, [Das teure Tabu](#). 2020)

The good news

- **Period-friendly social environment:** Over the past decade, the steadily increasing impact of MH Day has reflected growing global awareness for MHH. Between 2014 and 2025, the overall reach increased by 44-fold, the number of media articles by 281-fold, the number of social media posts by 25-fold, and the number of MH Day partners by 10-fold.
(WASH United, [Impact of MH Day](#), 2025)
- **Period education:** Systematic reviews found positive impacts of education interventions on improving menstrual knowledge, attitudes, confidence, and self-reported hygiene behaviours of girls.
(Evans R.L. et al., [Systematic review of educational interventions to improve the menstrual health of young adolescent girls](#). BMJ Open, 2022)
Note: There is no global consolidated figure available due to the difference in education approaches and methods of evaluation.
- **Period-friendly toilets:** The Bhutan government has committed to making all schools period-friendly by 2030, including improvements to the toilets and menstrual waste disposal. ([UNICEF](#), 2024)
- **Access to menstrual products:** 51 countries have removed or reduced taxes on menstrual products.
(WASH United, [Periodtax database](#), 2025)
- **Funding:** From 2018 to 2025, 29 national and sub-national governments have allocated budgets above US\$ 1 million to provide access to free or subsidised menstrual products.
(WASH United, [MHH Funding Tracker Insight Brief](#), 2026)
- **Return on investment:** An analysis of three educational interventions found that each US\$ 1 invested yields an estimated return of US\$ 2.60 - 3.44 (conservative to optimistic estimate). Three MHH interventions in the workplace resulted in between US\$ 2.03 - 3.03 gain for every US\$ 1 invested.
(Sanitation and Hygiene Fund, [Impact of investment in MHH on socio-economic well-being - Research Brief on Education Impact](#) and [Research Brief on Economic Impact](#), 2023)
- **Policy:** An increasing number of governments, both in high- and middle-income countries, have developed stand-alone MHH policies or included the issue in relevant policies. Recent policy wins:
 - In September 2025, the [Supreme Court of India](#) declared that the right to menstrual health and hygiene is a fundamental right under Article 21, directing states to ensure free sanitary pads and separate, functional, and disability-friendly toilets in all schools and awareness and training about menstrual health and puberty.
 - On MH Day 2025, [Tanzania](#) and [Uganda](#) launched their national MHH guidelines. [Nigeria](#) launched its guidelines in August 2025.

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