

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH POSTER

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Bridging Period Poverty and Environmental Sustainability: Empowering Adolescents in Makoko Lagos Through Reusable Menstrual Products

INTRODUCTION

Makoko, an informal waterfront settlement in Lagos State, Nigeria, is characterized by high poverty levels, inadequate basic services, and poor waste management systems.

These challenges disproportionately affect adolescent girls, for whom menstruation presents both a financial burden and an environmental hazard. With the average cost of disposable sanitary pads ranging between ₦500 and ₦1,200 per pack (UNICEF Nigeria, 2015), many families struggle to afford them regularly. As a result, girls often resort to unhygienic alternatives, increasing their risk of infections and contributing to school absenteeism.

Beyond the financial strain, improper disposal of used sanitary products adds to the environmental degradation of a community already battling pollution, flooding, and limited sanitation infrastructure (UN-Habitat, 2016).

Menstrual stigma and shame further deepen the issue, exposing girls to discrimination, isolation, and psychological distress—frequently reinforced by male peers.

METHODOLOGY

Conducted between November 2024 and February 2025 by Be Girl and YEDI, the intervention engaged 70 adolescents (45 girls, 25 boys)

The approaches used includes:

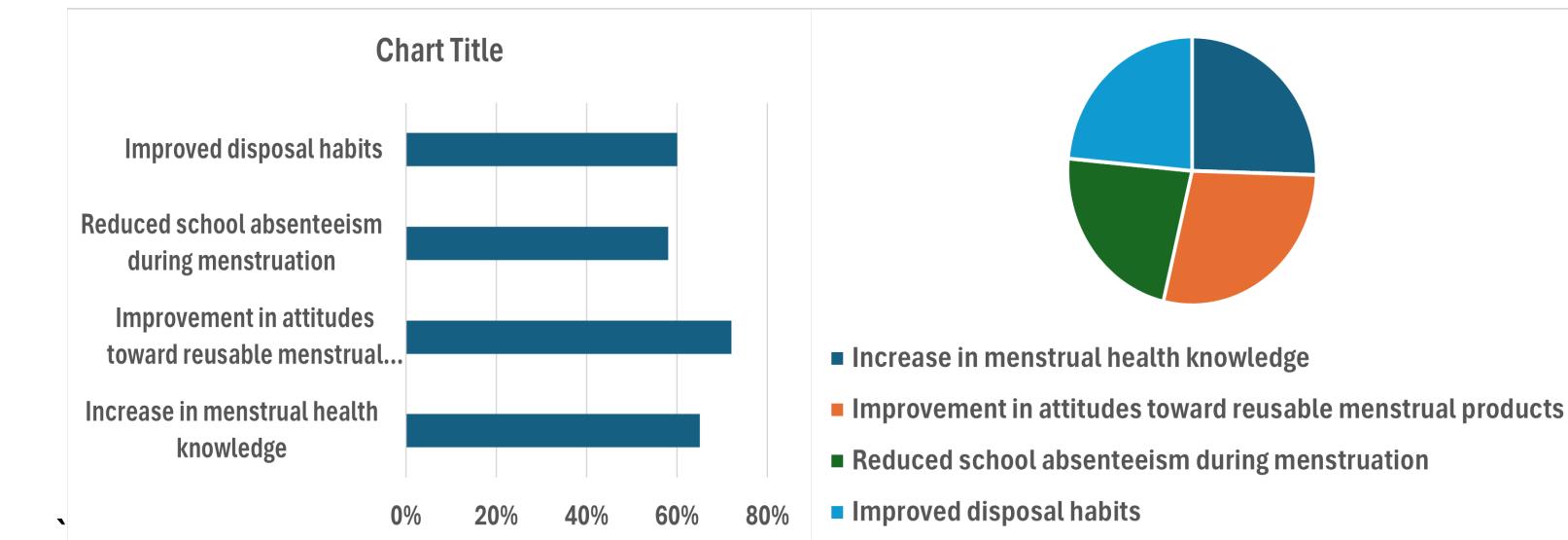
- Interactive workshops
- Pre- and Post Assessment
- Focus group Discussion

KEY FINDINGS

The intervention resulted in significant improvement in menstrual health knowledge, and attitude among adolescents. Findings showed:

- a 65% increase in menstrual health knowledge
- a 72% improvement in attitudes toward reusable menstrual products.
- 58% of girls reported reduced school absenteeism during menstruation. Additionally,
- 60% demonstrated improved disposal habits, opting for sustainable alternatives over single-use disposables.

EXPLAIN YOUR CHARTS



ANALYSIS

Findings showed a 65% increase in menstrual health knowledge and a 72% improvement in attitudes toward reusable menstrual products. 58% of girls reported reduced school absenteeism during menstruation. Additionally, 60% demonstrated improved disposal habits, opting for sustainable alternatives over single-use disposables.

CONCLUSION

Integrating sustainable menstrual products with targeted education effectively addresses period poverty while fostering eco-friendly practices. Such interventions can improve adolescent well-being, educational participation, and

This intervention responds to these multifaceted challenges by promoting menstrual dignity, sustainable hygiene practices, and inclusive education. By engaging both girls and boys, it addresses not only the practical needs of menstrual health but also the social attitudes driving stigma. The project aligns with SDGs 3, 4, 5, 6, and 12, fostering healthier, more inclusive, and environmentally conscious communities.

OBJECTIVE

- To tackle the intersecting issues of period poverty, stigma, and environmental degradation in Makoko by introducing adolescents to sustainable menstrual health solutions.

environmental consciousness in underserved communities like Makoko.



This learning study was made possible through the commitment and efforts of many individuals. YEDI and Be Girl believes that advancing the menstrual health through education and access to quality products is fundamental to upholding the rights and dignity of girls and women.



AFAY
Health Initiative



The AFAY Health Pad Bank Project: A Model for Menstrual Health Education and Access for Girls in Underserved Communities

Introduction

Period poverty limits access to safe menstrual products and health education for many adolescent girls in underserved communities. The AFAY Health Pad Bank Project addresses this by providing free pads, menstrual health education, and safe spaces, while linking plastic recycling with menstrual equity. This model empowers girls, reduces stigma, and promotes sustainable, inclusive solutions.

Methodology

- Mixed-methods: quantitative (pre/post-tests) & qualitative (interviews)
- Pad usage is tracked monthly via peer-managed registers
- Hands-on training on reusable pad-making for students
- Health talks and peer-led sessions are held in safe spaces
- Anonymous questions collected via question boxes and answered on the notice boards.

Objective

- Distribute monthly sanitary pads to at least 5,000 girls in underserved communities by December 2025.
- Establish and sustain 10 pad banks and safe spaces by December 2025.
- Train 100 peer educators on reusable pad-making and menstrual hygiene.
- Recycle 1,000 kg of plastic waste in exchange for sanitary pads



Results/Findings



Impact Area	Details
Knowledge & Confidence	Improved knowledge, reduced stigma and increased confidence among girls
Reach	5,500+ adolescent girls reached with monthly sanitary pad access & education (since Oct 2023)
Sustainability	1,000+ kg of plastic bottles recycled through pad-for-plastics model
Infrastructure	4 active pad banks / safe spaces established
Capacity Building	100+ peer educators trained in reusable pad-making & menstrual hygiene
Stakeholder Collaboration	Engaged Ministries of Health Education & Environment

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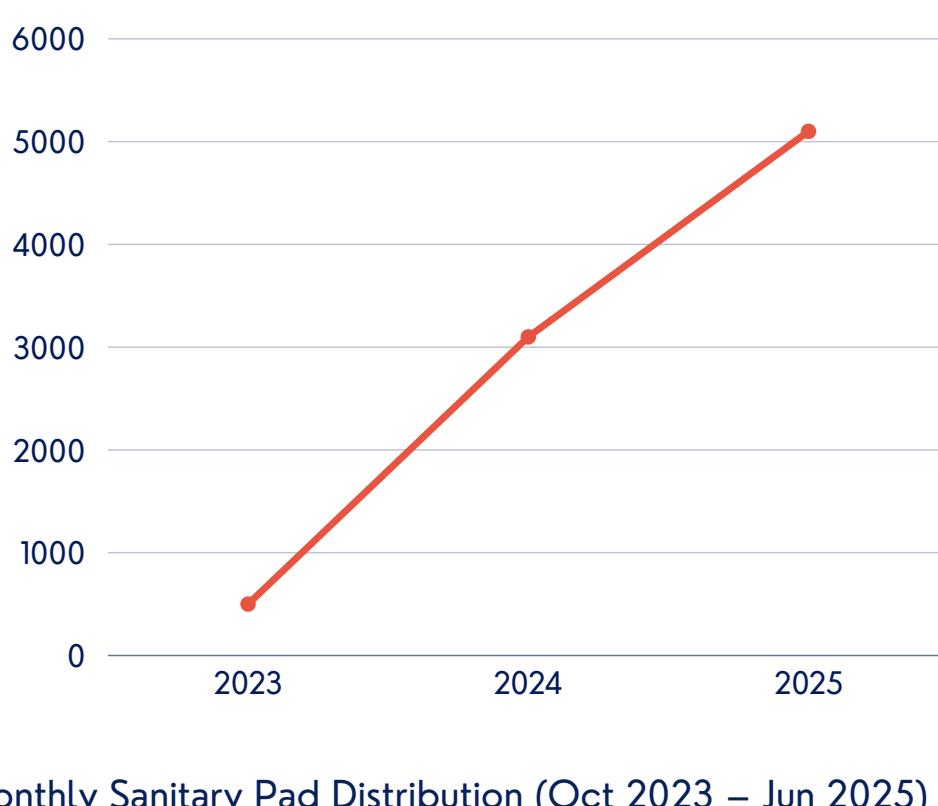
ADVOCACY FOR AGE-INCLUSIVE AND YOUTH HEALTH INITIATIVE



<https://linktr.ee/afayhealth>

Analysis

We analyzed pre- and post-test responses to measure changes in girls' knowledge and attitudes toward menstrual health. We reviewed pad bank registers monthly to track usage and identify trends. We also conducted a thematic analysis of interview to understand participants' experiences.



FEEDBACK

“

We all appreciate you guys for teaching us how to make reusable pads ourselves. This will reduce the money spent on buying pads...*Student*

“

Thank you, ma, I really enjoyed your speech on menstruation. I felt at rest after you delivered your speech on this topic. *SS2 Student*

Conclusion

The AFAY Health Pad Bank Project offers a sustainable, youth-led solution to menstrual health challenges in underserved communities. The project combines pad access, sexual and reproductive health and rights education, peer support, and plastic recycling, and this has improved girls' confidence, hygiene, and school participation.

We acknowledge our partners and funders: Victor Oyejide, Christiana Omosigho Foundation, The Chosen Inspira Foundation, Recycledge and Girls and goals initiative.

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Awodele, A. et al. (2023). Missing school during period: perspectives of adolescent schoolgirls in Cross River State, Nigeria. *PMC*. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9338695/> (Accessed June 2025)

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INTRODUCTION

Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) is critical to achieving gender equity, educational participation, and adolescent well-being. Despite increased global attention, English-speaking West African countries like Nigeria and Ghana continue to grapple with cultural stigma, weak infrastructure, and fragmented policy frameworks. This study explores the lived experiences of adolescent girls alongside the institutional responses shaping MHH outcomes in both countries.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- To assess menstrual hygiene knowledge, access, and practices among adolescent girls in Nigeria and Ghana.
- To analyze national and sub-national MHH policy implementation gaps.
- To provide evidence-based recommendations for more inclusive, youth-centered MHH policy frameworks.

METHODS

A mixed-methods approach was employed:

Systematic narrative review of 26 peer-reviewed articles.

Qualitative data from 78 participants: 65 adolescent girls and 13 key informants in Nigeria and Ghana.

Tools: Semi-structured FGDs and KIIs, analyzed using Atlas.ti.

Locations: Ghana (Asesewa & Accra), Nigeria (Ekiti, Kano, Cross River, Imo, Abuja IDP camps).

“Our school has no toilets or running water, so I go home during my period.” — FGD, Kano, Nigeria.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Menstrual Knowledge & First Experiences

Many girls lacked pre-menarche education, leading to fear and misinformation.

- Mothers and peers were the primary (and sometimes unreliable) sources of information.

2. Menstrual Practices & Product Use

Majority used improvised materials (rags, leaves, tissue) due to affordability barriers.

- Disposal challenges and lack of menstrual pain support were common.

“When I saw blood, I thought I was dying.” — FGD, Imo, Nigeria

Theme	Sub-Themes	Key Insights
Menstrual Knowledge and First Experiences	Pre-menstrual awareness	Many girls lacked knowledge prior to menarche, leading to fear. Mothers and peers were primary informants.
Menstrual Hygiene Practices	Sources of menstrual education	Girls used improvised materials due to affordability issues; disposal practices were unsafe or inadequate.
WASH Infrastructure	Disposal practices	Girls used improvised materials due to affordability issues; disposal practices were unsafe or inadequate.
Sociocultural and Religious Norms	Consequences for education Menstrual taboos	Poor or absent WASH facilities in schools led to absenteeism and poor menstrual hygiene management.
Access and Economic Barriers	Stigma and silence Affordability	Cultural and religious norms restricted girl' activities and fueled silence and shame.
Policy and Institutional Gaps	Reliance on external support Lack of comprehensive policy	National policy is fragmented or non-existent; implementation is donor-driven and lacks coordination.

Figure 1. Summary of Key Thematic Areas

3. WASH Gaps & School Attendance

Inadequate toilets, lack of privacy, and poor water supply in schools directly impacted attendance.

- 78% of participants reported missing school due to menstrual discomfort or facility inadequacy.

RESULTS (cont.)

4. Cultural Stigma & Taboos

Religious and sociocultural norms restricted girls' participation in daily and spiritual life.

- Fear of teasing and embarrassment led to silence and internalized shame.

5. Policy & Governance Gaps

No standalone MHH policy exists in either country.

Poor inter-ministerial coordination and over-reliance on NGOs compromise sustainability.

CONCLUSION

Despite ongoing advocacy and scattered interventions, menstrual health in Nigeria and Ghana remains significantly under-prioritized in national policy and planning frameworks. Addressing these persistent challenges requires:

- The development and implementation of standalone, well-funded menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) policies
- Strengthening water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure in schools to ensure privacy, safety, and consistent school attendance for adolescent girls
- Formal integration of menstrual education into school curricula for all genders to combat stigma and misinformation
- Sustainable public financing mechanisms to support local production and ensure affordable access to menstrual products
- Community-driven and youth-led engagement strategies to foster behavior change and inclusive policy design

This research provides critical, evidence-based insights for transforming menstrual equity in West Africa through multisectoral, sustainable, and gender-responsive policy reform.

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EMPOWERING MARGINALIZED GIRLS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE MENSTRUAL HEALTH EDUCATION

Presented By Bolu Olorunfemi

INTRODUCTION

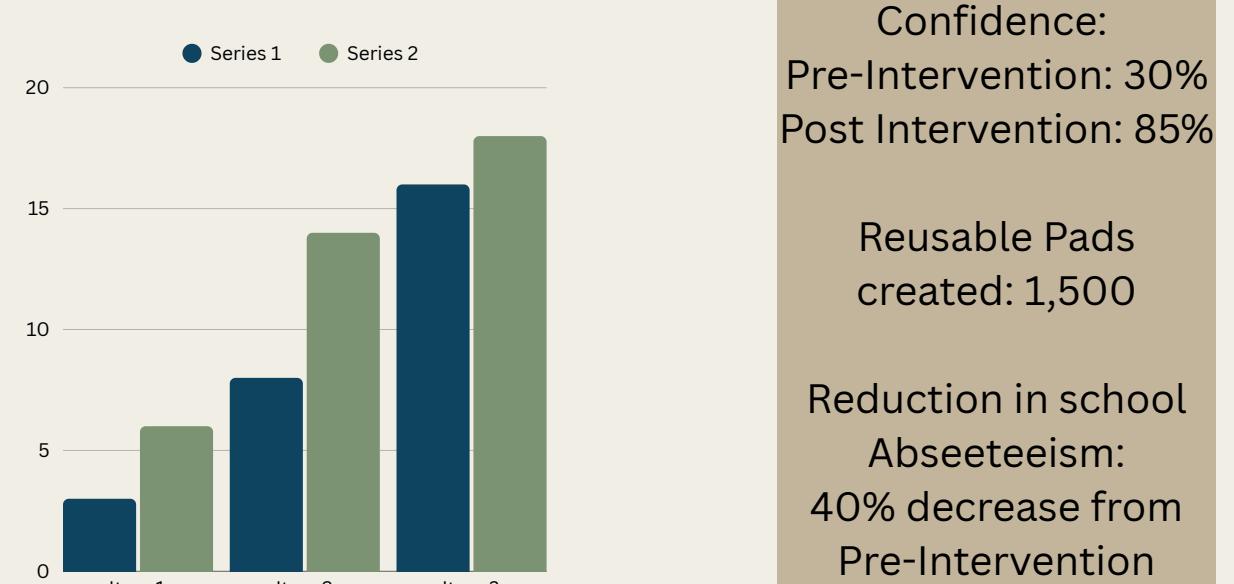
Menstrual health is a critical yet often overlooked aspect of women's health, particularly for marginalized girls who face significant barriers to accessing menstrual hygiene products and education. Period poverty affects millions of girls worldwide, leading to missed school days and diminished self-esteem.

OBJECTIVES

- To educate marginalized girls on menstrual health and hygiene.
- To provide practical training on creating and caring for reusable pads.
- To reduce dependency on disposable menstrual health products, which can be unaffordable for many.
- To highlight the environmental benefits of using reusable pads over disposable options.
- To foster community-wide awareness and break the stigma surrounding menstruation.

KEY FINDINGS

- Confidence in managing menstrual health
- Reusable pads created
- Increased knowledge of menstrual hygiene
- Reduction in school absenteeism



METHODOLOGY

The initiative targeted girls aged 12 to 18 across various marginalized schools in Nigeria, using pre and post-intervention surveys, focus group discussions, and direct observations during workshops.

LESSONS

This initiative highlights the importance of a multifaceted approach to menstrual health, emphasizing education, practical skills, and community engagement. Key lessons include:

- Tailoring interventions to cultural contexts.
- The power of peer education in breaking stigma.
- Collaboration with healthcare professionals enhances credibility.

CONCLUSION

By investing in the education and empowerment of marginalized girls, we can create lasting change that fosters healthier communities. The provision of reusable pads and wellness kits represents a sustainable solution to period poverty, enabling girls to manage their menstrual health with dignity.





SCALING A SUSTAINABLE MENSTRUAL HEALTH SOLUTION: THE COULDYOU? CUP IN NIGERIA

Authors Blessing Ajabiowe, Kofi Kyeremanteng Nyanteng, and Christine Garde Denning
CouldYou? / Ministry of Women's Affairs, Enugu State / Local CSO partners

INTRODUCTION

Menstrual health remains a critical, yet underserved, component of public health and gender equity in Nigeria. With an estimated 76.9 million menstruators, the challenge of providing safe, sustainable menstrual products is compounded by economic and environmental limitations. Disposable pads take 500-800 years to decompose and are financially unsustainable over a woman's 40 reproductive years. The CouldYou? Cup offers a scientifically proven alternative: an FDA-registered, 100% medical-grade silicone menstrual cup that lasts up to 10 years for only 15,640 NGN.

OBJECTIVE

- Scale menstrual cup access across diverse Nigerian communities
- Provide health education and follow-up support
- Address stigma and misinformation through community engagement
- Generate local economic opportunities
- Advocate for policy integration into national menstrual health strategies

METHODOLOGY

- Intervention Components:
 - Menstrual cup distribution with health education
 - Cotton carry bags sewn by marginalized women
 - Community sensitization and listening circles
 - Partnerships with 15+ CSOs and state governments
- Timeframe: 2021–2025 across 5 states
- Participants: Women & girls aged 15–45 in low-resource settings
- Data: KoboCollect mobile surveys + in-person baseline/endline on absenteeism, stigma & wellbeing
- Tracking: Digital logs of distributions & follow-ups
- Stakeholder Engagement: School/community forums, radio, gov't briefings, partner feedback loops

RESULTS AND KEY FINDINGS

- 5,000+ cups distributed → 445 tonnes CO₂ avoided over 10 yrs
- ↓ 35% school absenteeism among adolescent users
- Health gains: fewer BV/UTIs; improved vaginal microbiomes
- Economic impact: local women earned income sewing 5,000 carry-bags
- Policy wins: Serving on Nigeria's national Menstrual Health Technical Working Group

CONCLUSIONS

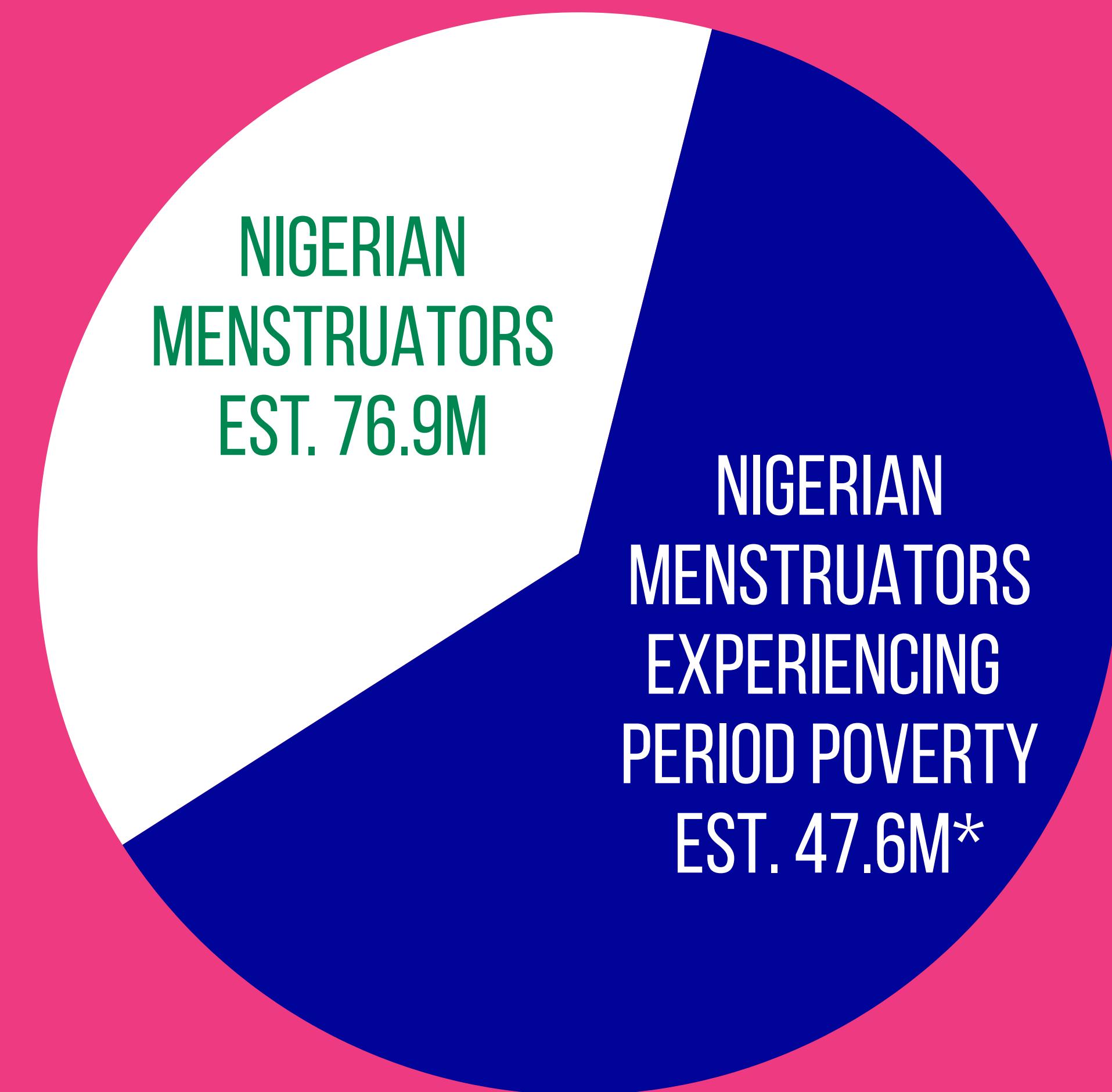
The CouldYou? Cup program demonstrates that a sustainable, affordable, and evidence-based menstrual health solution is viable and urgently needed in Nigeria. Key success factors include culturally sensitive sensitization, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and local economic inclusion. The program revealed the importance of breaking taboos and including boys and men in menstrual health education.

Next steps require policy integration: menstrual cups should be included in large-scale programs like the World Bank's US\$700 million AGILE initiative to provide a cost-effective, scientifically-backed solution to period poverty at national scale.

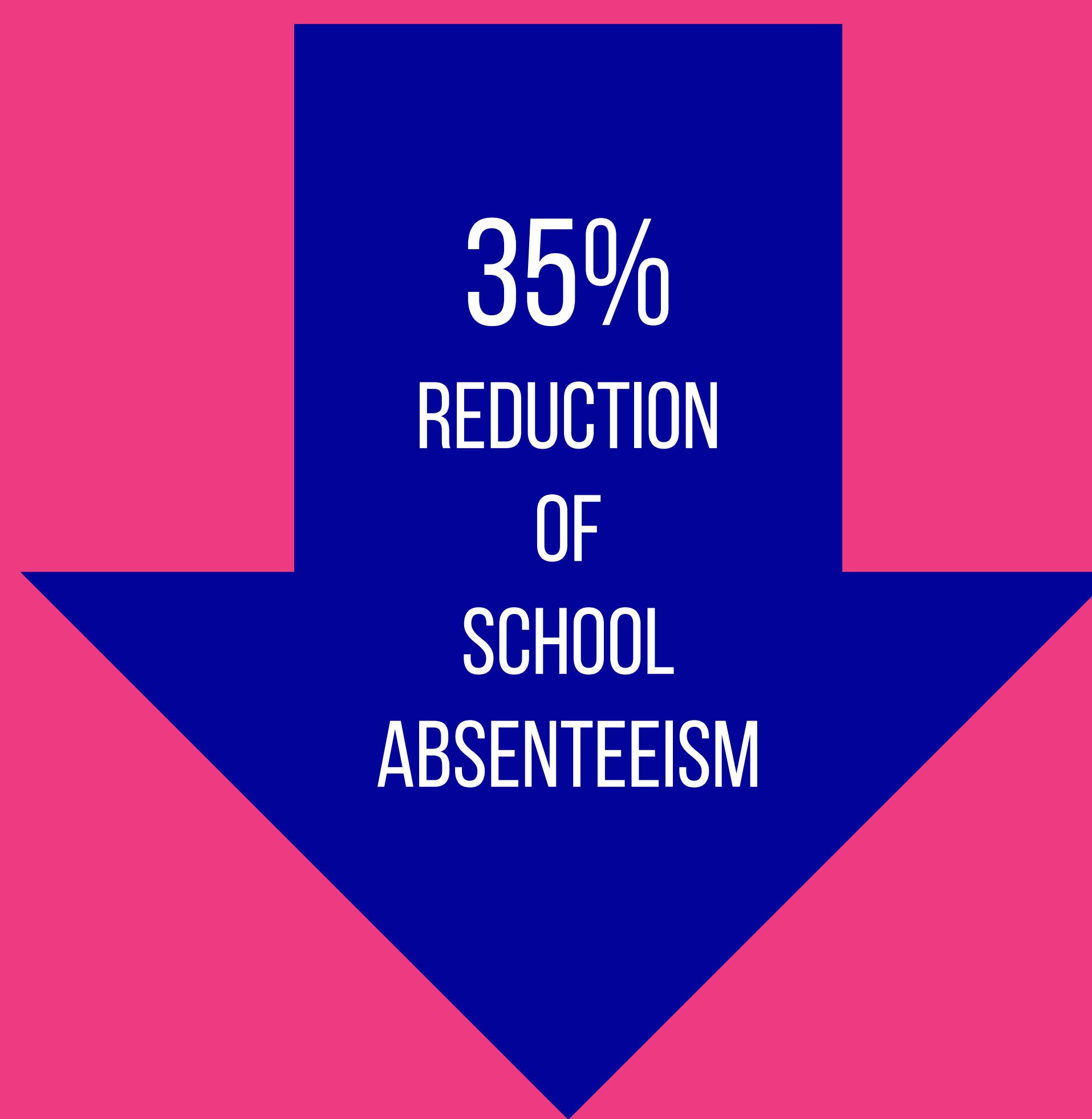
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Nigerian Ministry of Women's Affairs

For more information visit www.couldyou.org
or email info@couldyou.org



*Source: UNICEF & WaterAid. (2024). Nigeria menstrual health and hygiene monitoring assessment summary.



COULD
YOU?



WONDER WOMAN NIGERIA

Wonder Woman Nigeria is a community-driven, women-led non-governmental organisation that advances menstrual health rights and education, gender equality, and advocacy for survivors of GBV through storytelling, education, and empowerment. The organization works to end stigma, promote body autonomy, and ensure that no woman or girl is held back because of menstruation or harmful cultural norms.



PLASTICS FOR PAD PROJECT

Period poverty, stigma, and lack of access to menstrual products significantly affect adolescent girls' health, education, and dignity in Nigeria. The Plastics for Pads project, implemented by Wonder Woman Nigeria, adopts a circular economic model to improve menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) access through plastic waste collection, education, and community empowerment.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To improve access to reusable menstrual products among adolescent girls
- To promote menstrual health education and reduce menstruation-related stigma
- To integrate environmental sustainability through plastic waste recycling and community engagement

KEY METRICS

1. Coverage: 4 States (Kaduna, FCT, Plateau, Benue), 32 communities
2. Menstrual Hygiene Support:
 - 6,000+ girls sensitized on MHM
3. Sustainability:
 - Tons of plastic waste diverted through recycling – representing 1.4% of Nigeria's annual plastic waste output.
4. Community Engagement:
 - School-based hygiene workshops
 - Awareness sessions with parents, youth & leaders
 - Peer support groups and women-led recycling initiatives established

OUR IMPACT



- Access to MHH: 2,671 girls empowered with reusable pads
- Environmental Impact: 35,000 tons of plastic waste diverted through recycling.
- Educational Impact: 78% reduction in school absenteeism during menstruation.
- Social Inclusion: Community-wide destigmatization of menstruation; male and female stakeholders engaged.
- Empowerment: Women leaders earned income and led community efforts in collection and sensitization.

The Plastics for Pads project demonstrated that integrating menstrual health interventions with environmental sustainability is not only feasible but transformative.



Introduction

Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) refers to a range of physical, emotional, and behavioral symptoms experienced by females before menstruation. PMS has been underreported but significantly affects adolescent girls. The symptoms associated with PMS can interfere with academic performance, social interactions, and general well-being of adolescent girls. This study explored the knowledge, prevalence and associated QoL outcomes of PMS among adolescents.

Objectives

- To assess the prevalence and knowledge of PMS among female adolescents.
- To assess the quality of life of adolescent girls with PMS.
- To determine the association between premenstrual syndrome and quality of life.

Methods

- Multistage sampling was used to select 357 female adolescents aged 10-19 years in selected secondary schools in Ibadan.
- Data collection was done using a pretested interviewer-administered questionnaire.
- Twenty-nine questions were used to assess participants knowledge of premenstrual syndrome. Participants who scored below the mean knowledge score 14.28 ± 5.35 were considered to have poor knowledge.
- Severity of PMS was assessed as mild, moderate and severe. Those who had moderate and severe symptoms were considered to have PMS.
- Quality of life of participants was assessed by 5 domains which measured physical, mental, social functioning, general health and general satisfaction. The maximum obtainable score was 24, those who scored below 13.07 ± 5.83 were said to have poor QoL.

Results

- The mean age of the female adolescents was 14.78 ± 1.45 years.
- 77% of the adolescent girls had experienced PMS.
- About half, 45.40% had poor quality of life due to PMS.
- Female adolescents who experienced moderate backache had lower odds of reporting good QoL (AOR = 0.309; 95% CI: 0.095 – 1.001; p = 0.050), while those with severe backache were significantly less likely to report good QoL (AOR = 0.292; 95% CI: 0.090 – 0.943; p = 0.040), compared to those with mild backache.

Figure 1: Most Reported PMS Symptoms

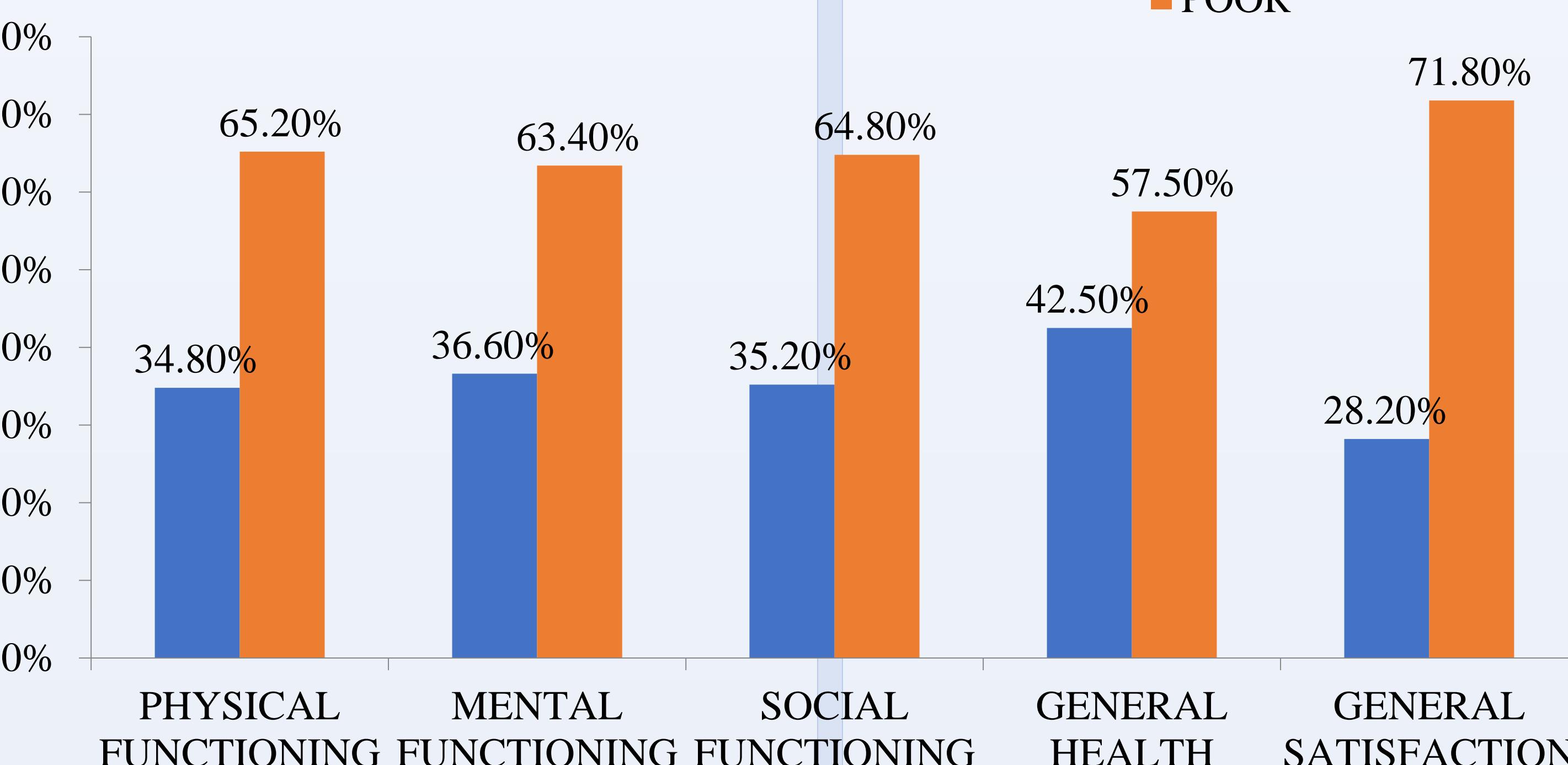
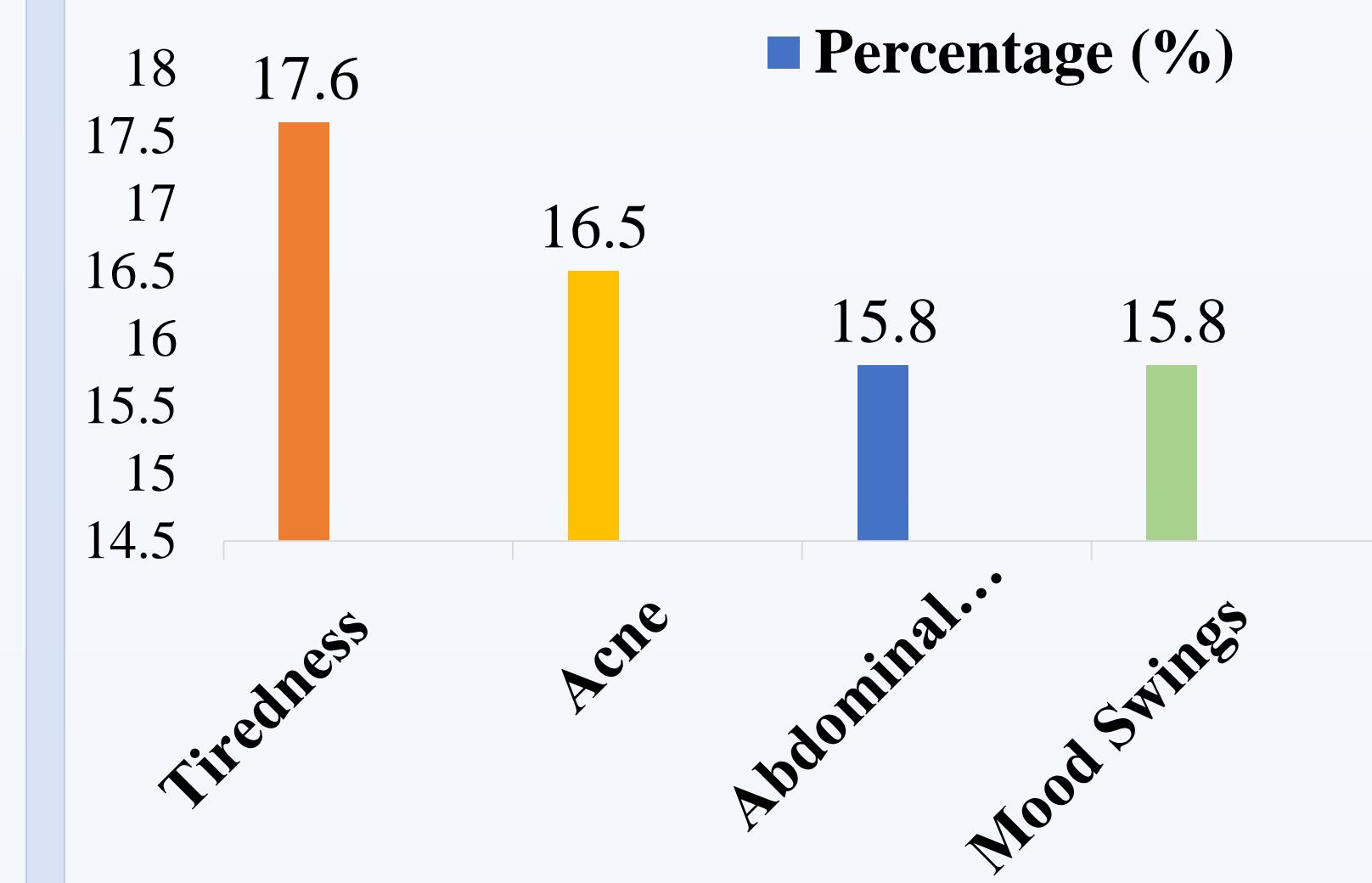


Figure 2:

Conclusion

This study showed a high prevalence of PMS among female adolescents in Ibadan, Nigeria, and its significant effect on their quality of life. Nearly half of the respondents experienced poor QoL due to PMS, highlighting its impact on adolescent well-being. The complex relationship between PMS knowledge and various QoL domains underscores the need for comprehensive educational interventions. Future research should explore the mechanisms underlying these relationships and investigate effective interventions for reducing PMS symptoms and improving overall well-being among adolescent girls. There is a need to provide or increase awareness on PMS among female adolescents in secondary schools. Ensuring increased awareness on premenstrual syndrome and how it can affect quality of life of female adolescents in secondary schools, this will prepare those who have not attained and those who have attained menarche in managing their symptoms.

Acknowledgement

We appreciate the principal and teachers and the adolescent girls in the selected secondary schools for their support and participation towards the success of the research.

PROMOTING DIGNIFIED MENSTRUAL HYGIENE FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS THROUGH SCHOOL-BASED WASH CLUBS IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA



Society for Family Health
...Creating Change, Enhancing Lives

SIGNIFICANCE / BACKGROUND

Adolescent girls in Nigeria particularly those in rural and semi-urban communities face considerable challenges in managing their menstrual health due to limited access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities within schools. Poor access to WASH facilities and adequate knowledge on Menstrual Hygiene Management practices (MHM) has been shown to contribute significantly to school absenteeism among adolescent girls who have achieved Menarche (Davis, 2018). To address these barriers, Society for Family Health (SFH), with funding from Procter & Gamble (P&G), implemented the WASH for Healthy Lives (W4HL) project, which was a social behaviour change intervention, that sought to tackle the interconnected issues of unsafe WASH practices and inadequate information on MHM found prevalent rural and underserved communities. The intervention created supportive environments where students (Girls) were trained as peer educators equipped with necessary information to engage their fellow students mostly girls on proper MHM practices.

PROGRAM INTERVENTION / ACTIVITY TESTED

The W4HL project rolled out its interventions beginning from January to December 2024. The intervention in Edo State centered on health education through student-led WASH clubs and one-on-one peer sensitization sessions, and (2) stakeholder advocacy with school management and local leaders. This strategy was aimed at enhancing knowledge and practices in relation to MHM and other WASH related issues. Male involvement was seen as critical especially for the reduction of stigma associated with menstruation, as the male students who participated in the WASH-Clubs were also trained on MHM. The intervention leveraged peer learning and institutional engagement to support safe, inclusive, and sustainable menstrual health management in schools.

METHODOLOGY

The intervention was implemented between January and December 2024 in 10 public secondary schools across Esan Southeast and Etsako Central LGAs in Edo State. A mixed-methods longitudinal study was conducted with quantitative data collected through structured questionnaires administered via Google Forms by trained schoolteachers. A total of 517 students participated in the baseline (pre-project intervention) and 459 at the endline (post-intervention). Most participants (79%) were aged 11-15. Female students were the demography of primary focus, particularly regarding menstrual hygiene knowledge, access to private spaces, and disposal mechanisms. A qualitative study was done via in-depth interview (IDI) with female students in the pre-selected schools, to assess their practices in MHM. Evaluation focused on pre- and post-intervention comparisons across indicators such as knowledge of WASH-preventable diseases, awareness of critical handwashing times, and availability of menstrual hygiene facilities. Data was analyzed using SPSS v25 and Excel. The evaluation aimed to determine the impact of school-based health education and stakeholder advocacy on girls' menstrual health awareness, hygiene practices, and ability to attend school with confidence during menstruation.

RESULTS/ KEY FINDINGS

The intervention yielded substantial improvements in menstrual hygiene knowledge and supportive WASH environments for girls in Edo State. Access to private spaces with water and soap for managing menstruation increased from 28% at baseline to 67% at end line. The availability of disposal mechanisms for menstrual waste also improved from 12% to 67%. All respondents at endline were able to name at least three diseases preventable through WASH, compared to just 47% at baseline. Knowledge of critical handwashing times improved from 18.8% to 41.8%, while those unable to demonstrate handwashing techniques dropped from nearly 40% to less than 2%. Student involvement in hygiene promotion also rose modestly: the percentage of students believed to be promoting hygiene at home increased from 25.1% to 27.8%. Qualitative responses highlighted that WASH clubs helped create safe, peer-supported environments where girls could ask questions, learn proper hygiene practices, and manage menstruation with greater confidence. Notable improvements in behavioral indicators and access to hygiene-enabling spaces suggest that education-focused interventions, if well executed, can be effective in achieving program objectives. These results reflect the value of girl-centered programming that integrates health education with school-community advocacy to build confidence, reduce stigma, and support adolescent girls' rights to dignity and education.



PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS / LESSONS

The results from the intervention in Edo State show that even in the absence of major infrastructure investments, targeted menstrual hygiene can lead to substantial improvements in adolescent girls' school experience. School-based WASH clubs provided a platform for peer-to-peer learning, enabling girls to openly discuss menstruation, acquire practical hygiene knowledge, and support one another. The presence of trained teachers, especially female staff, and involvement of male students in MHM knowledge management were instrumental in facilitating stigma-free learning environments. Improvements in knowledge and confidence suggest that school-led behavioral interventions are not only scalable but also sustainable with institutional buy-in. Advocacy with school authorities played a critical role in enabling behavioral change and facilitating the designation of private MHM-friendly spaces. Lessons learned from this intervention include the need for institutionalization of WASH and MHM topics into standard school curriculum, support of School-based health clubs with material-guides and structured supervisions are essential ingredients for program success. This intervention demonstrates the need for a shift in focus to investments with high impact using context-specific approaches, that contributes to national and global goals, particularly for vulnerable girls in underserved communities.



Authors

Jane Chinyere Adizue¹, Nnamdi A. Anosike¹



Empowering Rural Communities and Schools through Comprehensive Menstrual Health Hygiene Management: A Multi-Sectoral Success Story from Jigawa State, Nigeria

Paul Hassan Mshelbara
Rural Water Access Foundation

Background

Menstrual health remains an important yet neglected aspect of public health, especially in underserved rural communities and public schools across Sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria.

In Jigawa State, the Rural Water Access Foundation (RUWAF) implemented a culturally responsive menstrual health initiative.

Objectives

- Dispel harmful myths and menstrual taboos
- Provide hands-on training on reusable and disposable menstrual products
- Promote dignity, body autonomy and hygiene

Approach

- Gender-segregated sessions led by trained male and female facilitators
- School-based and community-based interactive engagements tailored for settings
- Culturally sensitive education materials tailored for low-resource settings



Results

- **43,000** adolescent girls and women reached
- **85%** of participants showed improved knowledge of menstrual health
- **72%** reduction in menstruation-related absenteeism in target schools
- **65%** of male participants reported increased empathy and reduced stigma
- Teachers reported increased class participation among girls in local health education



Conclusion

This initiative shows that community-based, gender-inclusive MHM education can effectively dismantle menstrual stigma, improve school retention, and empower girls and women — even in traditionally conservative settings.



Testimonies from the Field

- *Fati Abdullahi, Student* – "Before RUWAF came, I was shy and confused. Now I feel confident and know how to manage my period safely."
- *Khalid Abubakar, Community Leader* – "This is the first time boys and men in our community are learning about menstruation. It changed how we treat girls."
- *Aisha Lawal, Teacher* – "Girls no longer stay home during their periods. They are more active in class and even help others."





Menstrual Health - Now (MH-Now)

By: Population Services International (PSI)
Nigeria

Improving Menstrual Health and Hygiene Outcomes for Adolescent Girls and Young Women in Kano State, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION	METHODOLOGY	ANALYSIS
<p>Menstrual health and hygiene management (MHHM) is a critical yet often neglected issue affecting millions of women and girls worldwide, particularly in low-income settings. In Nigeria, MHHM challenges are exacerbated by inadequate education, stigma, unaffordable menstrual products, and lack of supportive policies. The MH-Now project aims to enhance MHH in Nigeria by increasing access to comprehensive knowledge and affordable menstrual products. This abstract highlights the critical issue of MHHM affecting girls and young women in Ghari, Garun mallam and Nassarawa LGAs of Kano state and how the MH-Now project aims to address that.</p>	<p>The project was implemented in Kano State, specifically across three Local Government Areas (LGAs): Ghari, Garun Malam, and Nasarawa, representing suburban, urban, and rural settings. Primary data was extracted from the activities of community-based facilitators known as Menstrual Health (MH) Champions. These MH Champions are trusted community influencers trained through a comprehensive Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHHM) curriculum to provide menstrual health information, counseling, and referrals for safe services and products to girls and young women. The primary beneficiaries were adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) aged 10–24 years, drawn from 15 communities across the three LGAs. Using a well-curated flipchart that conveyed key MH messages including</p>	<p>The MH-Now project demonstrates that a community-based approach to menstrual health and hygiene management (MHHM), when delivered through trusted local facilitators, can yield both immediate and measurable outcomes. Within just six weeks, 323 adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) across three local government areas (LGAs) in Kano State were successfully engaged—an achievement that reflects strong community receptivity and the effectiveness of targeted mobilization strategies.</p> <p>Age-disaggregated participation data reveals important insights: younger adolescents (10–</p>

<p> OBJECTIVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase access to accurate and comprehensive menstrual health information. • To empower adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) with knowledge and agency over their menstrual health. • To build a thriving rural market for affordable menstrual hygiene products. • To promote supportive environments through community engagement and policy advocacy. • To involve men and community leaders in menstrual health awareness and reduce stigma. 	<p>menstruation basics, hygienic practices for use and disposal of menstrual products, and addressing menstrual myths and stigma, the MH Champions facilitated 120-minute dialogue sessions with AGYW. Each group consisted of 15–20 participants, and the same participants engaged in two sessions of 60 minutes each with the Champions. Data was collected by the MH Champions through pre- and post-session assessments and quizzes designed to evaluate changes in knowledge.</p>	<p>14 years) were more engaged in Nassarawa LGA, while older participants (20–24 years) were better represented in Garun Mallam. These variations underscore the need for age-specific and context-sensitive strategies in future interventions. Assessment tools used before and after the dialogue sessions indicated clear improvement in menstrual health knowledge and reduced stigma. Participants demonstrated increased understanding of safe menstrual hygiene practices, product use, and disposal techniques, as well as a shift in attitude toward common menstrual myths.</p> <p>Beyond the quantitative outcomes, the project also catalyzed behavioral and social change. Qualitative feedback highlighted increased willingness among girls to seek guidance, as seen in the case of a participant from Garun Babba who initially resisted engagement but later approached a Champion for support. Community feedback,</p>
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- The sessions contributed to a notable reduction in stigma and increased openness toward menstruation discussions within the communities.
- Pre- and post-session assessments showed measurable improvement in understanding of menstruation basics, hygienic product use, and myth-busting.

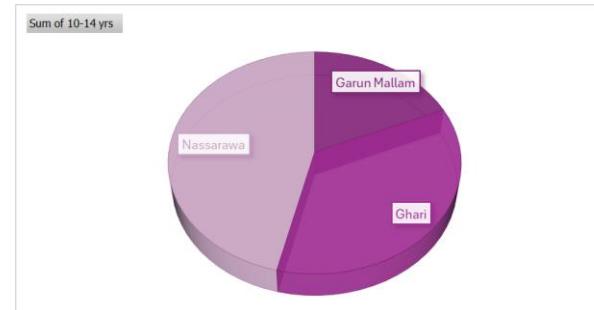


Fig. 1. 10–14 participants



Fig. 1. 15–19 participants

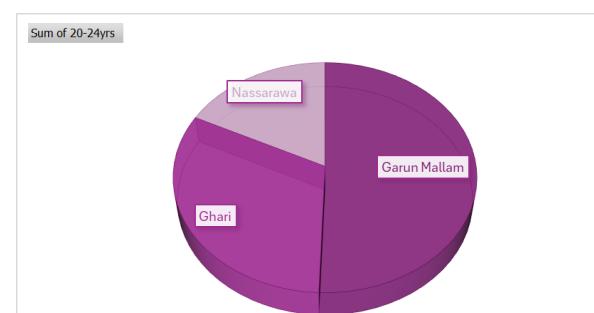


Fig. 1. 10–14 participants

including parental gratitude and participation by previously hesitant stakeholders, reinforced the project's success in building trust.

The training and inclusion of male champions—such as a teacher in Kwuiwa—further contributed to the breakdown of cultural taboos. This suggests that **inclusive programming involving male allies and community leaders can accelerate shifts in social norms**.

In summary, the project's effectiveness lies in its community-led model, culturally tailored messaging, and inclusive stakeholder engagement. The findings suggest that even within a limited timeframe, substantial impact can be achieved through localized, participatory MHHM interventions.

CONCLUSION

The MH-Now project underscores the effectiveness of community-led, inclusive strategies in improving menstrual health and

hygiene outcomes for adolescent girls and young women in underserved Nigerian communities. By combining targeted education, the involvement of trained community influencers (MH Champions), and inclusive stakeholder engagement—including men and community leaders—the intervention successfully improved menstrual health knowledge and reduced stigma. The project highlights the importance of culturally responsive programming and demonstrates that even short-term interventions can yield measurable social and behavioral change. These findings support the case for scaling similar approaches across other low-resource settings to address menstrual health challenges more sustainably.

ACADEMIC RESEARCH POSTER

Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of Menstrual Hygiene Among Adolescent Girls In Government Secondary Schools In AMAC, F.C.T, Abuja, Nigeria

Introduction

Menstruation marks a key stage in girls' reproductive maturity, yet many lack proper knowledge due to cultural taboos, poor education, and limited access to hygiene products. This can lead to infections, absenteeism, and low self-esteem. Addressing menstrual hygiene management (MHM) is vital for girls' health and dignity. Effective policies must promote equity and gender-sensitive education.

Research

- Assess the level of knowledge on menstrual hygiene practice among adolescent girls
- Increase the level of awareness on menstrual hygiene amongst adolescent girls.
- Examine the attitude of adolescents towards menstrual hygiene.
- Examine the practice of menstrual hygiene amongst adolescent girls.

Methodology

Research :

Descriptive Cross-sectional study.

Data Sample :

A total of 209 adolescent girls aged 10-19 years.

Data Collection :

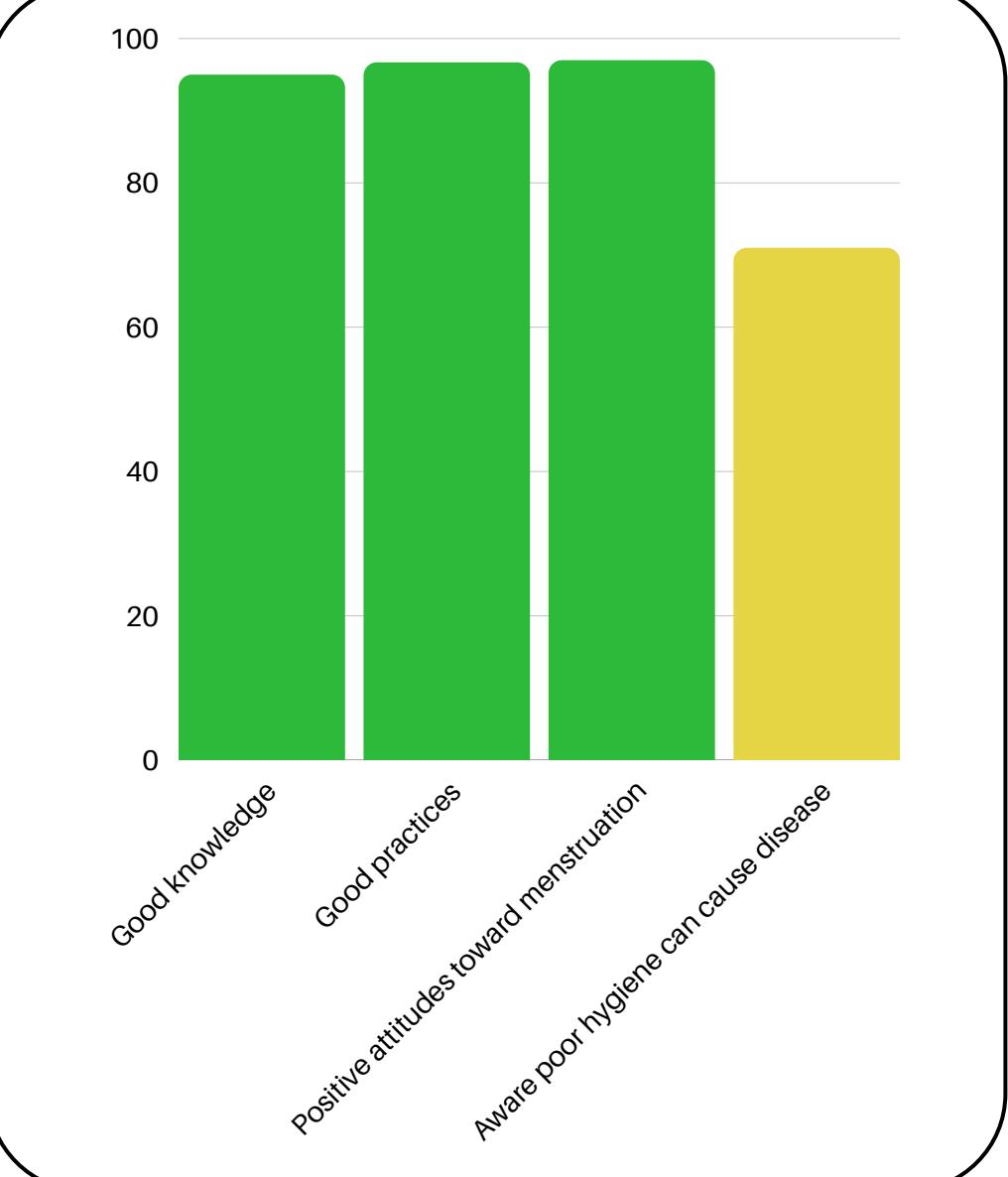
Semi-structured, interviewer-administered questionnaires and focus group discussions (FGDs)

Discussion

This study sheds light on menstrual hygiene in low- and middle-income settings like AMAC, Abuja. Adolescent girls show promising knowledge, but stigma and cultural barriers still hold them back. The findings call for inclusive, gender-sensitive school programs to support menstrual health. Involving boys and community leaders is vital to breaking taboos and fostering lasting change.

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Pads with Purpose: Promoting Menstrual Hygiene Education to Empower Girls and Boys

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²Federal Medical Centre, Yenagoa

A Community Impact Story on Menstrual Hygiene

Introduction

In Bayelsa State, Nigeria, limited disposable income, poor menstrual health education, and lack of access to hygiene products are silently keeping girls out of school. Worse still is the lack of empathy and support from their male counterparts during menstrual cramps or when their uniforms are stained.

Objectives

We launched the *Operation Pad A Girl Initiative* with the aim of normalizing the conversations on menstruation for both boys and girls. In addition, ensuring that every girl has access to the right health education and boys provide social support as brothers and classmates.



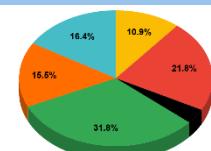
Methodology

With approval from BYSMOE, menstrual hygiene sessions were held in 8 secondary schools in Yenagoa, including special needs schools. 1,200 girls and 800 boys participated in interactive sessions with demonstrations on sanitary pad use. Over 110 questions were answered, and private moments were shared with girls who needed it. Girls received sanitary pads, boys got stationeries, and schools were given educational materials and antiseptics. Semi- structured interviews were conducted with school staff to assess impact.

Key Findings

Thematic analysis of questions from both girls and boys revealed five key concerns: period timing and tracking, menstrual pain, medication effects, sexual health, and traditional practices. 10% of girls said the sessions helped them speak up about menstruation for the first time, and 35% learned it's a normal, healthy process. Initially, boys laughed at the use of pads but later showed interest in supporting their peers. Also, they asked why condoms are freely distributed, unlike pads, underscoring the gap in sexual health focus. School officials reported that the sessions were impactful but reported the lack of washrooms, sanitary bins and pads for urgent use.

Chart



% of Questions Asked

- Period timing and tracking
- Menstrual pain
- Medication effects
- Sexual health
- Traditional practices.
- Menstrual Hygiene

Voices of Girls and Boys

- “This is the first time someone explained why I feel pain during my period.”
- “My mother said I shouldn't burn my used pads as I will be burning my blood.”
- “Does it mean I can support my sister by buying sanitary pads?”
- “Now, I can cook on my periods, and I know it is safe.”

Conclusion

By educating boys and girls on menstrual hygiene and fostering empathy in boys, the initiative is normalizing issues on menstruation advocating for washrooms and empowering boys and girls.

Acknowledgement

All donors of free pad distribution

ACADEMIC RESEARCH POSTER ON MENSTRUAL HYGIENE;

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, AND PRACTICES AMONG ADOLESCENTS GIRLS IN CALABAR SOUTH, NIGERIA

INTRODUCTION

Menstrual hygiene management (MHM) is crucial for adolescent girls' health and wellbeing. Poor MHM practices can lead to physical and emotional distress.

OBJECTIVE

To investigate MHM knowledge, attitudes, and practices among adolescent girls in Calabar South, Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Cross-sectional study
- 400 adolescent girls from 4 public schools
- Structured questionnaire
- Descriptive statistics and chi-square analysis

KEY FINDINGS

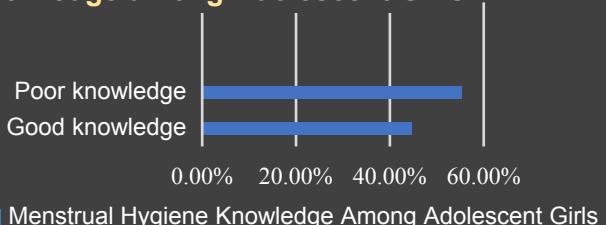
- 55.4% of respondents had poor knowledge of menstrual hygiene
- 28.0% had poor menstrual hygiene practices
- Parental education significantly influenced hygiene practices ($p=0.001$)

CONCLUSION

The findings inform public health education and policy efforts to promote menstrual health and wellbeing among adolescent girls in Nigeria.

VISUALIZATION

Bar Chart: Menstrual Hygiene Knowledge among Adolescent Girls

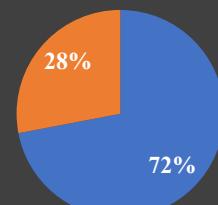


- Good knowledge: 44.6%

- Poor knowledge: 55.4%

Pie Chart: Menstrual Hygiene Practices Among Adolescent Girls

■ Good practices ■ Poor practices ■ ■



- Good practices: 72.0%

- Poor practices: 28.0%

DISCUSSION

The study highlights the need for targeted interventions to improve MHM knowledge and practices among adolescent girls. Key implications include:

- Integrating MHM into school curriculum
- Providing access to sanitary products and sanitation facilities
- Engaging parents and community leaders to promote positive attitudes towards menstruation

ANALYSIS

The study highlights the need for targeted interventions to improve MHM knowledge and practices.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LEVERAGING FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES TO PROMOTE CLIENT'S COUNSELLING ON MENSTRUAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT IN NORTHERN NIGERIA:

A Case of MSI Nigeria Reproductive Choices

Submitted by: Aisha Adegbé, Aanuoluwapo Afolabi, Ogechi Onuoha, Emmanuel Ajah

Affiliation: MSI Nigeria Reproductive Choices

Significance/Background:

1 in 3 women in Northern Nigeria face stigma and taboos around menstruation

Many rural women and girls use unhygienic alternatives like rags, leaves, and feathers

Poor menstrual health leads to school absenteeism, low self-esteem, and infections

Menstrual Health Management (MHM) remains underprioritized in reproductive health

Integrating MHM into Family Planning (FP) offers an opportunity to reach more women with education, services, and products

Programme intervention:



Project: Reproductive Health and Pandemic Resilience (RHPR)

Geographical Coverage: Adamawa, Taraba, Katsina, Kebbi, and Zamfara States

Results:

300,065

women & adolescent girls reached with FP + MHM counselling

22,000

reusable pads distributed

62,132

(1 in 5) were adolescents

15 schools

with functional SRH/MH clubs

- Reduced absenteeism, improved self-esteem, and better hygiene practices reported.

Lessons:

- ✓ Integration of MHM into FP services boosts access and dignity
- ✓ School health clubs are powerful platforms for sustained impact
- ✓ Virtual hubs and youth-friendly centres bridge access to services

Recommendations

1. National Menstrual Health Policy – Develop and institutionalize.
2. Scale Integration – Leverage schools, FP clinics, and digital support hubs.
3. Invest in Local Solutions – Promote local production and social marketing of reusable pads.

Approach:

- Integrated MHM into FP service delivery.
- Used FP services as an entry point to provide MHM education and products.

Methodology:

Training: 10-day workshop for 300 healthcare providers on:

- MH counselling (pad types, hygiene, cramp management, privacy).
- Adolescent-friendly services & Values Clarification.
- Balanced FP counselling & method provision.
- Reusable pad distribution prioritizing adolescents.
- Data management via hybrid DHIS-2 system.

• School Outreach:

- Strengthened 15 health clubs in Taraba.
- Supported SRH education in schools.

• Community Engagement:

- Radio jingles and print materials to tackle stigma.
- MSI Contact Centre as virtual support.

Olutosin Sanyaolu, PhD, CHES, and Adesola Olumide, PhD, FWACP, FMCOPH

Fort Lewis College, Durango, USA¹, and Institute of Child Health, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria²

INTRODUCTION

- Menstrual hygiene is a crucial but often overlooked aspect of adolescent health, especially in low-resource settings where poor sanitation, limited education, and stigma cause health issues and school absences.¹⁻²
- Nigeria, like many low- and middle-income countries, faces critical gaps in menstrual education, access to sanitary materials, and supportive school environments.³
- Schools play a pivotal role in promoting menstrual health by providing institutional support and infrastructure, such as private, clean toilets and proper disposal options.⁴

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- To assess menstrual hygiene knowledge and practices among in-school adolescent girls in Ibadan North Local Government Area, and to examine how socio-demographic and school environmental factors influence these practices.

METHODS

- Cross-sectional mixed-methods study conducted among 336 girls (ages 10–19) from four randomly selected schools in Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Data collected in 2013 via questionnaires, school facility checklists, and menstrual diaries ($n = 25$).
- Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS v20; qualitative data were analyzed descriptively and thematically.
- 96.4% received menstrual hygiene information.
- The primary sources of information were mothers (58.6%) and teachers (19.8%).
- Only 38% practiced good hygiene.
- Private school girls had better hygiene practices (51.2% vs. 25.6%, $p \leq 0.0001$).

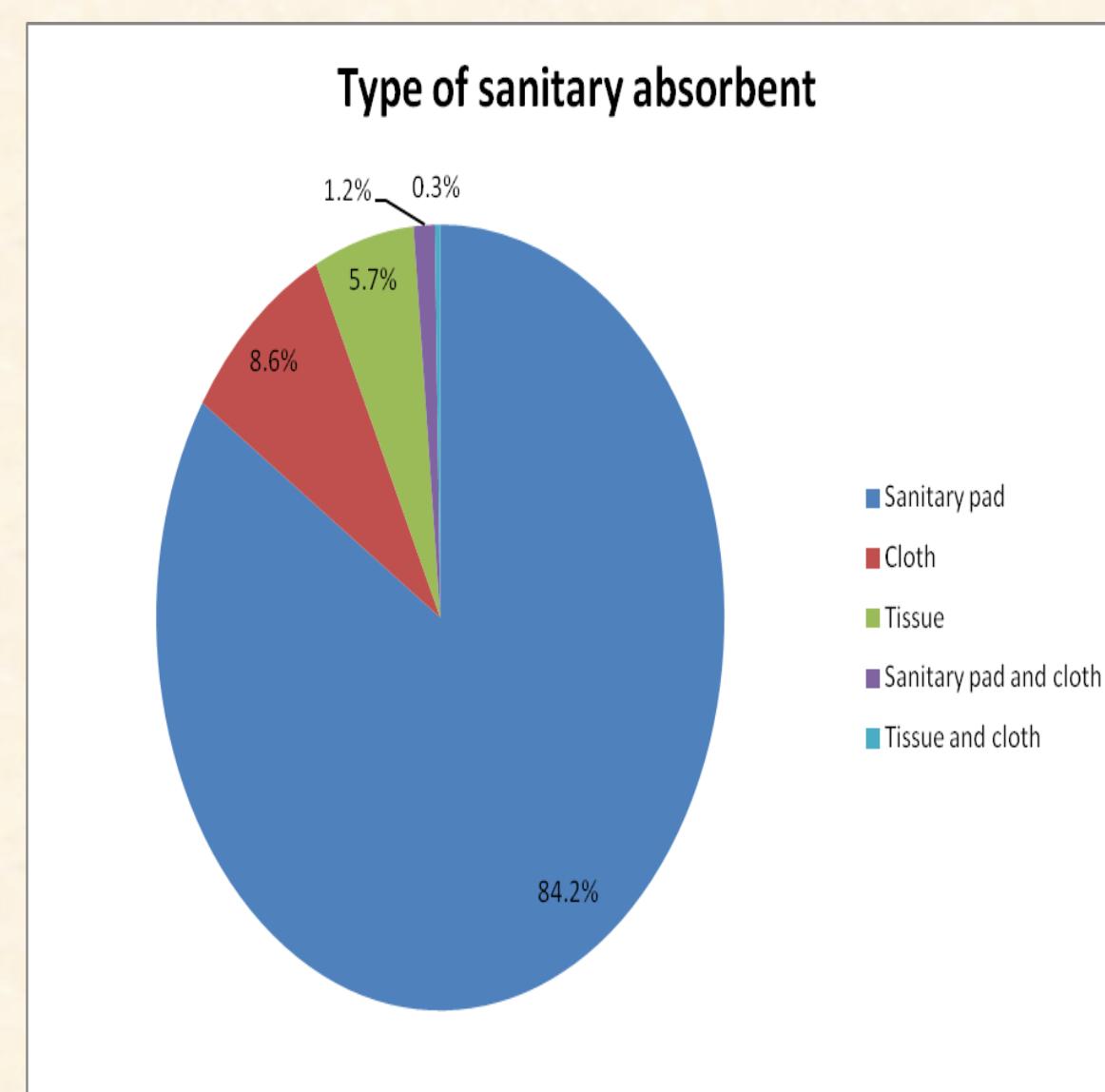


Figure 1. Type of Absorbent Used

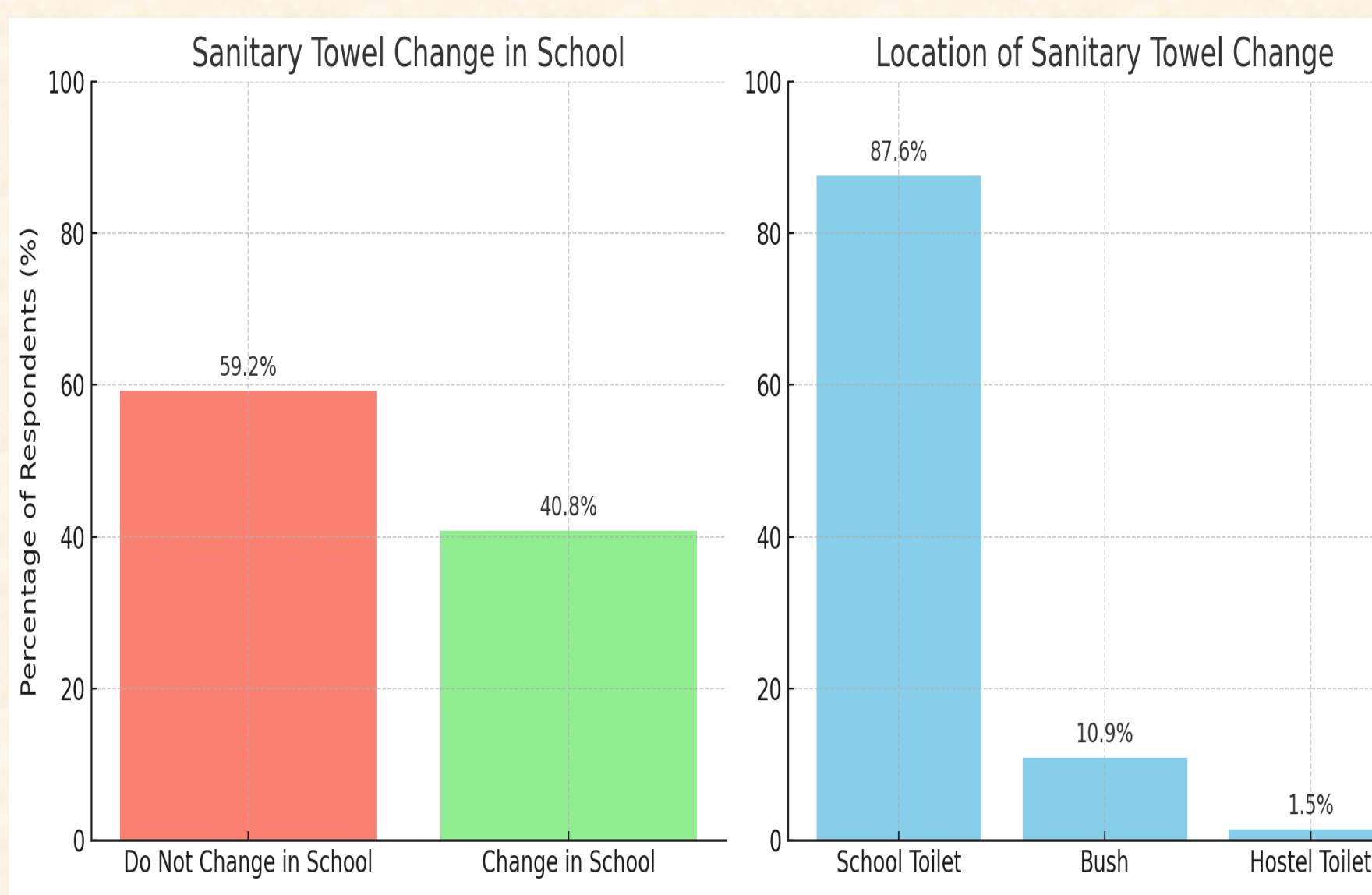


Figure 2. Percentage of respondents who change sanitary towels in school (left) and locations used for changing among those who do (right)

RESULTS

- 66.0% of respondents were aged 13–15 years.
- 94.3% of mothers had at least secondary education.
- 94.3% of respondents had good menstrual knowledge.
- Knowledge of menstruation was significantly higher among girls whose mothers had higher education (97.8% vs. 87.7%, $p = 0.014$).
- Knowledge of menstruation was also significantly better among girls from upper socioeconomic classes (95.5% vs. 84.0%, $p = 0.002$).

RESULTS (cont.)

The Environmental Observations (Checklist)

- Private schools had cleaner, better-equipped toilets with more privacy.
- Public schools lacked essential facilities, such as water, soap, and waste bins.
- Functional locks and wash basins were more prevalent in private schools.

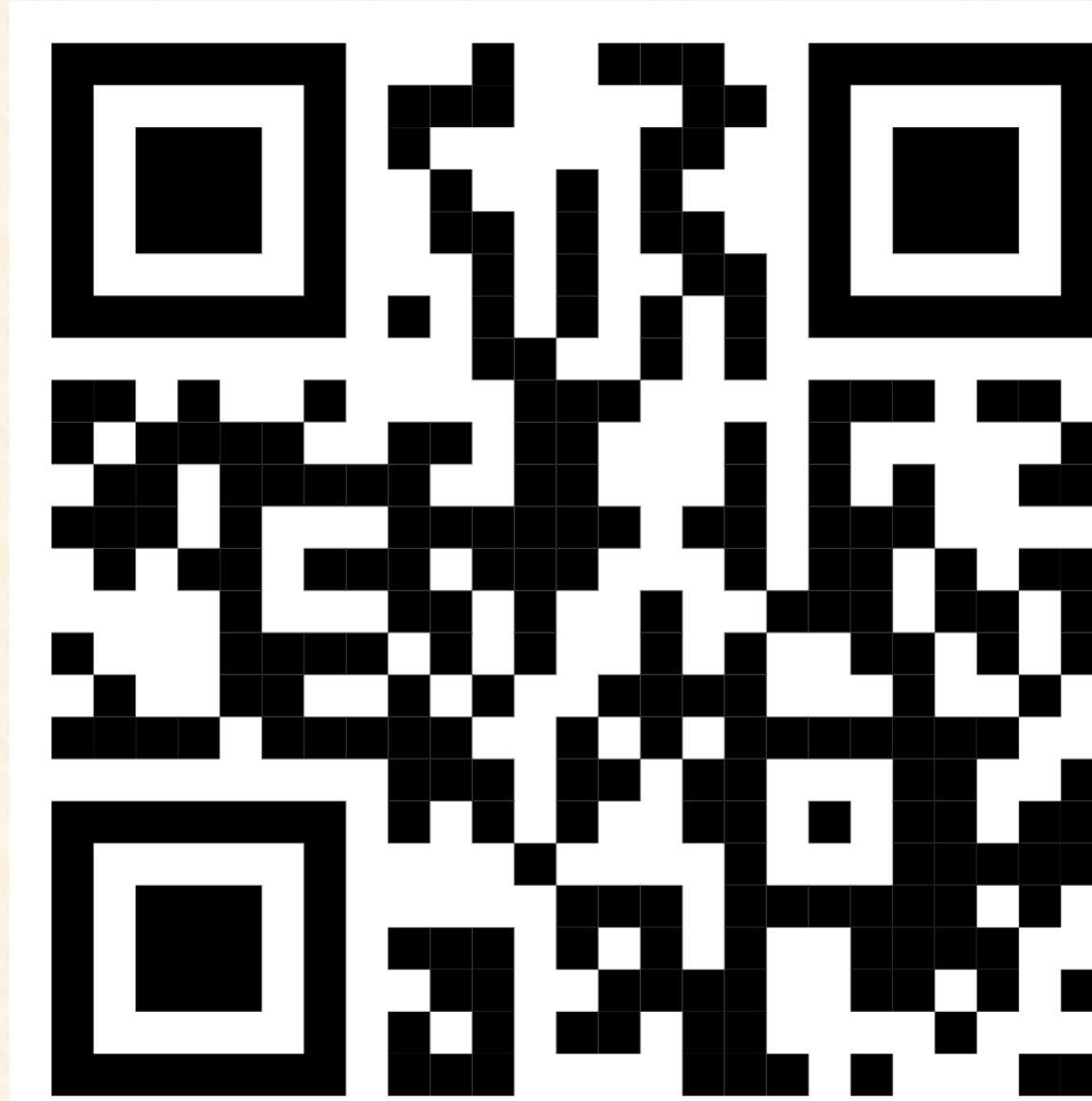
Diary Analysis

- Many Girls frequently reported fear of staining and embarrassment.
- Many skipped school due to menstrual pain, lack of facilities, or inadequate privacy/support.

CONCLUSION

- Improving menstrual hygiene in schools requires more than awareness; it demands access to clean, private toilets, water, and proper sanitary disposal facilities.
- Policies and school health programs should prioritize menstrual health management as a core component of adolescent well-being.
- By addressing both educational and infrastructural gaps, we can create safe and supportive environments that empower girls to manage menstruation without shame, discomfort, or academic disruption.

REFERENCES



MENSES NOT A MESS:

PROMOTING MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN CALABAR, NIGERIA



AUTHORS: YOJORSAM STEPHEN OKOI, ERIKAN EYAKNDUE, CECILIA UKWIN AFO AND GIFT AKOH

BACKGROUND

IN MANY COMMUNITIES ACROSS CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA, MENSTRUATION REMAINS A TABOO TOPIC, OFTEN LEADING TO MISINFORMATION, STIGMA, AND POOR HYGIENE PRACTICES AMONG ADOLESCENTS. THESE CHALLENGES NOT ONLY AFFECT THE HEALTH AND SELF-ESTEEM OF YOUNG GIRLS BUT ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM AND GENDER INEQUALITY.

TO HELP CHANGE THIS, TEAM DREAMWEAVERS, UNDER THE LEAP AFRICA YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, IMPLEMENTED THE "MENSES NOT A MESS" PROJECT AT GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL AKIM, CALABAR. THE AIM OF THIS INITIATIVE IS TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT MENSTRUAL HYGIENE, EDUCATE STUDENTS ON PROPER PRACTICES, AND ENCOURAGE A SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT WHERE MENSTRUATION IS OPENLY DISCUSSED AND RESPECTED BY BOTH GENDERS. THE PROJECT ALSO SOUGHT TO INTRODUCE A SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE TO DISPOSABLE SANITARY PRODUCTS BY TEACHING GIRLS HOW TO MAKE REUSABLE PADS. WITH MENTORSHIP SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY ENCOURAGEMENT, THIS YOUTH-LED INITIATIVE AIMED TO BREAK MENSTRUAL STIGMA AND EMPOWER STUDENTS THROUGH KNOWLEDGE AND HANDS-ON SKILLS.

METHODOLOGY

THE PROJECT USED A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH, COMBINING EDUCATION AND SKILL-BUILDING ACTIVITIES. A PRE-INTERVENTION NEEDS ASSESSMENT INFORMED THE DESIGN OF THE SESSIONS. ON THE 10TH AND 11TH OF OCTOBER 2024, STUDENTS WERE ENGAGED THROUGH INTERACTIVE TALKS THAT ADDRESSED MENSTRUAL HYGIENE, DEBUNKED MYTHS, AND EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPATHY AND DIGNITY DURING MENSTRUATION. THE GIRLS WERE TAUGHT HOW TO MAKE REUSABLE PADS USING AFFORDABLE MATERIALS. A Q&A SESSION ALLOWED STUDENTS TO SHARE PERSONAL EXPERIENCES, ASK QUESTIONS, AND GAIN CLARITY ON ISSUES SURROUNDING MENSTRUATION. A POST-SESSION FEEDBACK EXERCISE WAS CONDUCTED TO ASSESS THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE GAINED AND THE STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE IN USING AND SHARING THEIR NEW SKILLS. TEACHERS WERE ALSO INVOLVED TO ENSURE SUSTAINED IMPACT BEYOND THE PROJECT DAYS.

KEY FINDINGS

THE "MENSES NOT A MESS" PROJECT RECORDED SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AMONG PARTICIPATING STUDENTS. PRIOR TO THE INTERVENTION, MANY STUDENTS, ESPECIALLY GIRLS EXPRESSED DISCOMFORT AND MISINFORMATION REGARDING MENSTRUATION. AFTER THE SESSIONS, FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS INDICATED INCREASED KNOWLEDGE ON MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PRACTICES, BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE WORKS, AND REDUCED STIGMA SURROUNDING THE TOPIC. STUDENTS APPRECIATED THE OPENNESS OF THE SESSIONS, NOTING THAT THE INTERACTIVE AND PRACTICAL APPROACH MADE LEARNING EASIER AND MORE RELATABLE. THE REUSABLE PAD-MAKING SESSION WAS ESPECIALLY WELL RECEIVED, WITH MANY GIRLS COMPLETING THEIR PADS SUCCESSFULLY AND EXPRESSING CONFIDENCE IN USING THEM. TEACHERS REPORTED A NOTICEABLE SHIFT IN STUDENTS' ATTITUDES, AND MORE WILLINGNESS TO TALK ABOUT THEIR PERIODS. SOME CHALLENGES INCLUDED TIME LIMITATIONS, WHICH RESTRICTED THE DEPTH OF DISCUSSIONS, AND INITIAL RESISTANCE ROOTED IN CULTURAL BELIEFS. HOWEVER, THE SAFE SPACE CREATED DURING THE SESSIONS HELPED OVERCOME THESE BARRIERS. OVERALL, THE INTERVENTION SUCCESSFULLY MET ITS OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATING STUDENTS, REDUCING MENSTRUAL STIGMA, AND PROVIDING A SUSTAINABLE MENSTRUAL PRODUCT ALTERNATIVE.



CONCLUSION

"MENSES NOT A MESS" DEMONSTRATES THAT EVEN SMALL-SCALE, WELL-TARGETED INTERVENTIONS CAN HAVE LASTING EFFECTS ON ATTITUDES, KNOWLEDGE, AND PRACTICES SURROUNDING MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE.



BREAKING THE SILENCE: PROMOTING MENSTRUAL HEALTH EDUCATION AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN BAUCHI STATE, NIGERIA

AUTHORS & CO-AUTHORS:

Mary Mbukpa, Julasaya Kambarawa, Yunus Abdulhamid, Hanoch Hebron, Raphael Aworinde, Nasir Musa, Comfort Runyi Effiom, Afolabi Ahmed, Ibrahim Ladan, Tunde Aremu, Laban Onisisimus, Helen Idiong

BACKGROUND

In many homes in Nigeria, conversations about menstruation between adolescents and guardians are nearly absent, few and shrouded in secrecy. As a result, adolescent girls often receive fragmented information from peers and friends, much of which is filled with myths and misconceptions. This leads to poor knowledge about menarche, appropriate menstrual materials, and self-care during their periods. This gives rise to self-stigma, low self-esteem, absenteeism from school, and use of unhygienic materials for periods, which can lead to infections and long-term negative sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

PROGRAMME

To address these issues, Plan International Nigeria implemented a 30-month KOTEX-funded Menstrual Hygiene Management Project in partnership with the Community Initiative for Promotion of Health and Education Sector. The project was implemented as part of Plan International's localisation agenda for combined programming to strengthen the capacity of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in programming.

The overall purpose of this project was to increase the individual and collective agency of women and adolescent girls to exercise their rights to gender-responsive, adolescent-friendly and inclusive menstrual health management in Bauchi state. Specifically, this project aimed to increase the access of women and girls, men and boys in Bauchi state to menstrual health management knowledge and education using safe, traditional and innovative communication mechanisms; and to increase women and girls' confidence to tackle gender-related sociocultural, structural and other barriers to proper, safe and inclusive menstrual health management.

METHODOLOGY

Intervention was carried out in three Local Government Areas - Bauchi, Katagum and Ningi, representing each of the three senatorial districts of Bauchi State, North East, Nigeria. The project targeted in- and out-of-school adolescent girls and young women with a total of 9,000 direct participants (65% female- including adolescent girls (10-19), women, community members and traditional leaders directly participating in peer and Community-Based programming) and 191,000 indirect participants (60% female- including friends, peers and family members of adolescent girls (10-19), women, community members and traditional leaders directly participating in peer and Community-Based programming).

Using a structured curriculum, trained peer educators facilitated five modules through quarterly cycles of interactive sessions and the use of information leaflets to reinforce Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) messaging. Animated videos in Hausa and English were produced as promotional materials. In addition, Sanitary Pad banks were established in 33 select schools. Community influencing activities included engagement included sensitisation of health workers on the provision of youth-friendly health services, religious leaders' mobilisation and community engagement of 100 Women groups (Mata Dari, Muriya Daya) and Male Champions, as well as media messaging.

Monitoring was conducted through monthly review meetings, spot checks, and supervisory visits from government officials and the CSO partner. Endline assessment used outcome harvesting methodology, comparing baseline and post-intervention data from in- and out-of-school adolescents.

KEY FINDINGS

- Knowledge of appropriate menstrual hygiene increased significantly, with 100% of in-school and out-of-school adolescent girls reporting confidence in managing menstruation post-intervention.
- School absenteeism due to menstruation dropped from 49% at baseline to 15% at endline.
- Awareness among adolescent boys improved, with a reduction in period-shaming behaviour and 94.1% of boys reporting confidence in supporting menstruating peers; teasing incidents declined, and many boys began advocating for improved school sanitation facilities.
- Over 98% of in-school adolescent girls could correctly identify menstrual hygiene products post-intervention.
- Girls expressing confidence in managing their period increased from 62% to 97%.
- Over 78% of endline survey respondents reported exposure to MHM radio programming.
- Communities initiated independent discussions and local leaders began advocating for girl-friendly WASH facilities; Religious leaders began advocating for MHM resources in schools and public facilities, they reached over 9,700 community members with positive MHM messages, leading to Communities reporting reduced stigma and more open discussions on menstruation and addressing cultural myths and supporting girl-friendly initiatives.
- Pad usage increased from 45% at baseline to 81% at endline.
- 93% of respondents indicated increased openness to discussing menstruation at home.
- Government partner pledged to provide and sustain pad banks, with the passage of the bill in March 2025 as evidence of this commitment.

LESSONS LEARNT

- Building strong local structures and multisectoral partnerships ensures MHM sustainability. National policy frameworks should formally recognise and support these community-driven efforts.
- Adolescent peer education, when structured and consistently supported, is an effective method to empower girls with accurate knowledge and self-confidence. Integration of this into the school curriculum or extracurricular curriculum in the form of a health club and scale-up to other LGAs is recommended.
- Empowerment of parents and communities to be able to provide age-appropriate, comprehensive sexuality education to adolescent girls and boys promotes holistic norm change. Projects should include family-focused interventions and male engagement strategies.
- Institutionalising Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) by understanding the menstrual cycle and menstrual hygiene management into school systems is key to sustainability.
- The Ministry to deepen content on MHM and national MHM frameworks and budget lines for school-level implementation.
- Faith-based advocacy has a strong potential to change social norms. Continued engagement and institutionalisation of MHM in religious discourse is recommended to increase acceptance and sustainability, or broader impact.
- Media campaigns are effective tools for shifting menstrual health norms at scale. Continued collaboration with media houses and integration of community voices enhances reach and acceptance.
- Including boys in menstrual health education reduces stigma and promotes a supportive school environment. Future programs should ensure gender-inclusive modules and male youth role models as peer educators.
- The availability of functional pad banks and WASH facilities in schools would reduce the rate of absenteeism.

SUCCESS STORY

TIME OF THE MONTH

By: Population Services International
(PSI) Nigeria

Using the Media to Break Menstrual Silence in Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is commonly surrounded by deeply embedded shame, misbelief, and enforced silence. In Nigeria, menstruation is often surrounded by silence, shame, stigma, and misinformation reinforced by cultural taboos and myths. Despite its relevance, menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) often receives minimal attention within broader reproductive health programming. Boys and men are often excluded from these discussions, reinforcing gendered misunderstandings and stigma. This stigma contributes to school absenteeism, poor mental health, and lack of open discussions and understanding including support especially by boys and men. Women also

KEY FINDINGS

- Digital Reach:
 - Music Video: **106,424 views, 3,400 likes**
 - Short Film: **117,351 views, 2,900 likes**
- Strong social engagement and public comments showed attitude shifts.
- Men increasingly identified as supporters and champions for menstrual health.
- The campaign made menstruation a public, normalized topic.

Music Video	106,424	3,400	714
Short Film	117,351	2,900	335.7

Fig. 1. Digital Reach

CONCLUSION

Time of the Month campaign demonstrated that culturally resonant, emotionally engaging media materials especially music videos can be powerful tools in breaking menstrual health stigma. A key success factor was the active participation of high-profile influencers from Nollywood and the Nigerian music industry, whose visibility helped normalize conversations about menstruation. Their authenticity and local relevance amplified message credibility and emotional impact. At PSI Nigeria, we learned that social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube are essential for reaching adolescents and young women. These

face discrimination and restrictions in their communities. The broader impact includes perpetuation of gender inequality, poor health outcomes, and a society where critical conversations about menstrual health are avoided or ignored. To address these challenges, PSI Nigeria through its flagship Menstrual Health and Hygiene Program (MH-NoW) launched the Time of the Month campaign.

OBJECTIVES

- To promote open dialogue, dignity, and menstrual confidence through storytelling.
- To use culturally relevant media tools and renowned celebrities to engage the public, normalize menstruation and address associated stigma.
-

METHODOLOGY

The TOTM campaign deployed a short film and an **8-minute 48-second music video** featuring top Nigerian celebrities like Yemi

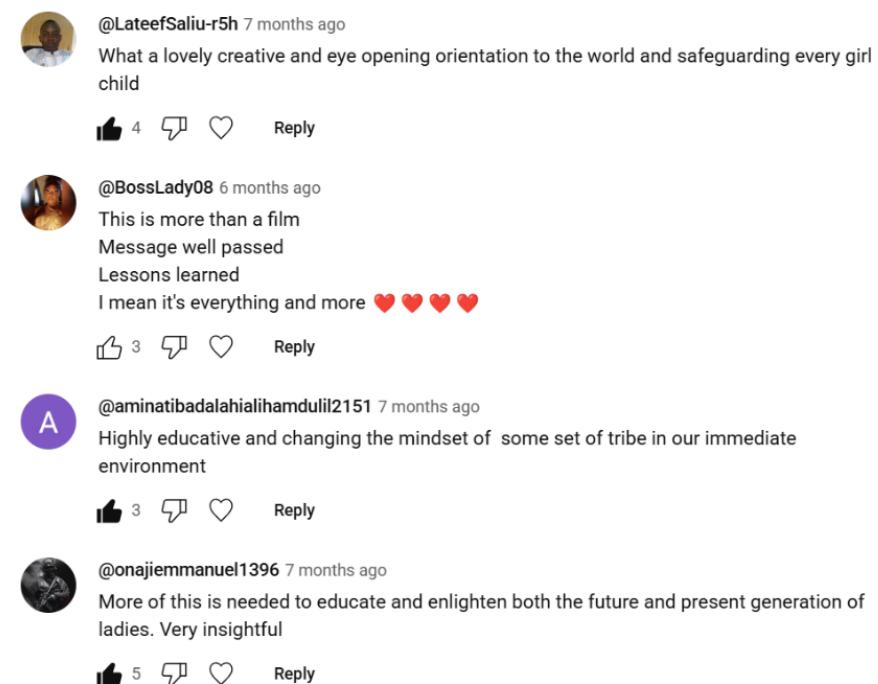


Fig. 2. Viewers Comment on TOTM

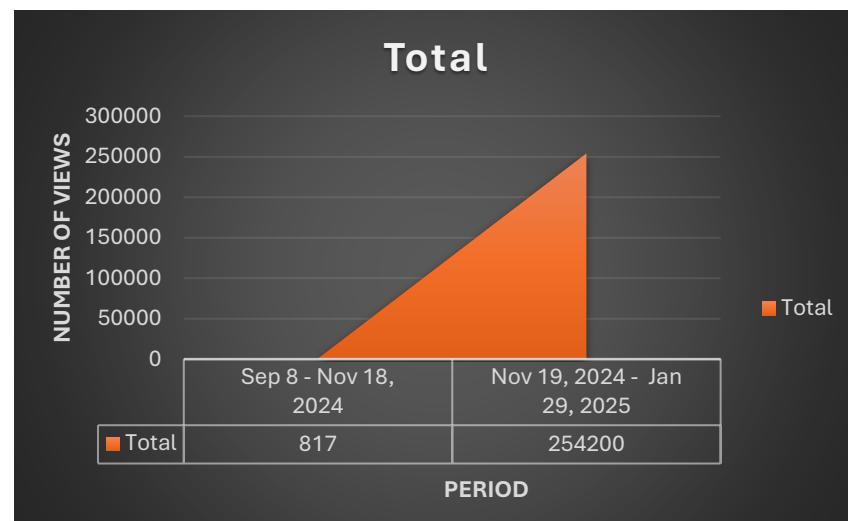


Fig. 3. Channel Engagement

platforms, when used creatively, offer the visibility and viral potential to embed menstrual health into everyday conversations. For future programming, prioritizing these platforms ensures campaigns remain youth-centered and digitally accessible. Maintaining engagement requires consistency and interactivity. Collaborations with micro-influencers helped penetrate niche communities and build trust. Another key insight is that storytelling particularly through music and lived experiences humanizes menstrual health issues and promoted emotional connection and community dialogue. The campaign's success shows that menstrual health interventions are impactful when they are participatory, culturally-rooted, and media-driven.

Alade, shared on YouTube and available to a public audience. and terrestrial media. It told three stories:

1. Fatima's story – Presented through a cultural lens, this story highlights an adolescent girl whose father believes in the myth that girls should be married off at the onset of menstruation. It promotes the message that girls can stay in school with proper menstrual support.

2. Uche and Ronke's Story – This segment addresses cultural myths and stigma around menstruation, emphasizing the importance of spousal support and open conversations within the household.

3. Workplace Story – pushes for menstrual health awareness in the workplace advocating for supportive environments for menstruating individuals.

The campaign launched on **November 19, 2024**, and served as kickers for discussions during radio call in programs

ANALYSIS

- **Reach:** The short film slightly outperformed the music video in terms of views (+10,927) This may be attributed to the use of a narrative-based communication approach, utilizing storytelling and dramatization techniques to enhance audience engagement and message retention.
- **Engagement:** The music video received more likes, indicating it may have been more emotionally impactful or entertaining.
- **Watch Time:** The music video had significantly higher watch time (714 hrs vs. 335.7 hrs), meaning viewers likely watched a larger portion of the video or watched it multiple times, indicating deeper engagement.
- **Message Penetration:** The campaign succeeded in amplifying taboo conversations through relatable storytelling and music.
- **Male Inclusion:** Significant shift in male perception, positioning them as supporters, is a critical breakthrough in menstrual health awareness.

hosted around the launch period. Data was continuously collected via media analytics and viewer engagement metrics.	• Digital Strategy: A strong rollout between November 2024 and January 2025 drove massive traffic and awareness.	
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