



SANITATION
FOR MILLIONS



Service Offer

Menstrual Hygiene Management –
Advocacy on Policy Level and Cooperation
with the Private Sector

This service offer contributes to the achievement of various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 6.2 (equitable sanitation), SDG 3 (good health), SDG 4 (quality education), and SDG 5 (gender equality).

It focuses on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) at the policy level and in cooperation with the private sector. It provides an overview of essential background information, critical minimum standards, and the necessary steps for implementation. The content is informed by the practical experience of the 'Sanitation for Millions' programme. It is part of a series of service offers developed by the programme as part of a commission from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in 2022. Another service offer includes MHM activities on community level. For more information, please refer to the service offer "MHM on Community Level".

Key features

- **Anchoring MHM at the political level:** Ensuring visibility and consideration of MHM-related topics at political level is crucial to the achievement of SDG 5.
- **Gender Equality and Empowerment:** Proper menstrual health resources enable women and girls to participate fully in educational, social, and economic activities, improving mental health and overall well-being.
- **Supportive Networks:** Establishing networks fosters long-term sustainability of MHM improvements, benefiting social, economic, and ecological aspects of communities.
- **Cooperation with the private sector:** Private sector actors are key partners to achieve MHM improvements at large scale.

Addressing menstrual health comprehensively leads to a more equitable and empowered society where women and girls can thrive.

Our Services

This service offer consists of two work packages:

- **Work Package 1** describes activities to foster MHM knowledge and engagement on policy level, including relevant actors of the public sector.
- **Work Package 2** refers to forms of cooperation with the private sector in the field of MHM.

Target Groups

- **Advocacy on policy level:** Public sector actors (e.g. ministries, parliamentarians, local/national politicians, representatives of faith-based institutions, civil society organisations)
- **Cooperation with the private sector:** Private sector actors (e.g. private companies involved in production of hygiene products)

Prerequisites for Implementation

To provide the service successfully, the internal and external conditions listed below are met.

- **Consent and ownership of the concerned authorities:** Political support is provided by the concerned authorities and there are no objections of any political, societal, or religious agency.
- **Technical expertise:** A cooperative co-working with the several partner countries and their capacities are crucial for a successful implementation of the planned activities.
- **Strategy:** A successful implementation strategy includes ideas and remarks of the target group, both human and financial resources, and a suitable methodology.
- **Constant involvement of counterparts:** The counterparts are involved in the elaboration of an implementation framework and the clarification of several roles and responsibilities on different levels of engagement.
- **Financial resources:** Financial resources from both the project and the counterparts are crucial to implement trainings and awareness activities.
- **Internal knowledge management:** Regular experience exchanges are conducted to learn from each other and to transfer best practices among regions and countries.

Monitoring

The presented long-term impact-oriented activities both within the “advocacy on policy level” and the “cooperation with the private sector” work packages require individually tailored monitoring mechanisms. Long-term impacts often only become visible after the end of project implementation, which is why it is advisable to implement a progress monitoring system in the meanwhile, focusing on what has been the direct impact of the measure on the sector compared to the initial status quo. Therefore, several steps should be undertaken:

- **1. Initial analysis and description** of the MHM policies and/or private sector engagement before the planned intervention in the respective context
- **2. Definition of the target state** (how the sector should look like after the planned intervention)
- **3. Setting qualitative and quantitative milestones** (depending on the respective activity and context)
- **4. Continuous progress** reporting including qualitative and quantitative data and information on conducted relevant events, meetings, consultative workshops, or other related activities.

Risks

Despite thorough preparation, risks cannot be entirely excluded. Key risks and mitigation strategies include:

- **Stakeholder Support:** The involvement of ministries and partner institutions is essential. Risks from limited financial and human resources are mitigated through initial meetings, resource assessments, identifying focal persons, and defining roles and responsibilities.
- **Sustainable Impact:** Ensuring continuous application of minimum standards in training and awareness activities post-contract is crucial. MHM activities are integrated into national planning and budget plans to ensure sustainability.
- **Social and Political Acceptance:** Capacities in complex institutions are strengthened by creating MHM committees with multidisciplinary teams, and socially and culturally appropriate training materials are developed to ensure the sustainability of awareness activities.

- **External Shocks:** Additional resources should be calculated to be able to handle unexpected events like pandemics or natural disasters.

Work Packages in Detail

Work Package 1: MHM on Policy Level

Menstruation is still considered a low priority topic by many governments and key public sector actors around the globe, and this is reflected in their policies as well. Engaging and providing knowledge to key actors at different levels, such as civil society organizations (CSOs), parliamentarians, and advocacy groups (e.g., in public institutions, community groups, etc.) is a way to enable them to raise their voices and stress the importance of the issue out of the view of the society. Awareness on and access to safe menstrual hygiene contributes to improved health, access to education, economic participation and overall well-being of women and girls. Advocacy on this can be done through different kinds of activities, depending on country context.

Key components include:

- **Engaging and providing knowledge:**
 - Holding advocacy meetings with the (political) leaders on the MHM topic
 - Conducting awareness creation to community groups, public institutions to equip them with relevant information on MHM. This can be done through open campaigns and IEC materials.
 - Capacity building and mentorship of the local and institutional leadership.
- **Enabling exchange:**
 - Holding dialogue meetings with different focus groups, including local, cultural, and religious leaders
 - Building coalitions that support mentorship, coordination, and monitoring of MHM activities at operational level.
- **Inclusion into policies**
 - Providing secretariat support to MHM working groups at all levels
 - Incorporating MHM in provincial education sector plans
 - Developing guidelines for schools and education institutions.

Work Package 2: Cooperation with the Private Sector on MHM

The private sector plays a critical role in meaningful implementation and sustainability of MHM intervention at all levels. It helps in leveraging resource contributions (technical and financial and material) from companies, foundations, organized groups, and other private actors, which contributes to improved MHM.

The exemplary activities listed below can provide good entry points for activities in cooperation with the private sector in the field of MHM:

- Collaboration with private sector for **joint initiatives**, e.g., joint training, awareness sessions, distribution of sanitary products to the beneficiaries, etc.
- **Identifying and mapping of private sectors and its stakeholders**, e.g., companies, small-scale enterprises, etc. in order to engage them in cooperation, especially regarding the provision and making of reusable pads and other hygiene materials.

- **Engagement of private companies dealing with MHM supplies** to support schools through distribution of MHM supplies like soap and reusable pads for emergency purposes, as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility. Training of community groups on MHM awareness activities at local level.
- **Setting up linkages between MHH material manufactures/providers and MHM material suppliers** to provide supply services at a subsidized cost to increase the access to MHH materials for the local population. Ideally, these cooperations take place on a local level to ensure a continuous and sustainable supply chain.
- **Engaging private sector actors to explore MHM related topics** like biodegradable sanitary napkins in countries in the Global South, tax free MHM products, etc.

Material for implementation provided by Sanitation for Millions (Annexes)

- Annex 1 – Memorandum of Understanding: Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management Guidelines for schools in education institutions in Uganda
- Annex 2 – Balochistan Education Sector Plan 2020 - 2025
- Annex 3 – Document of Understanding GIZ – Santex (2020)



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