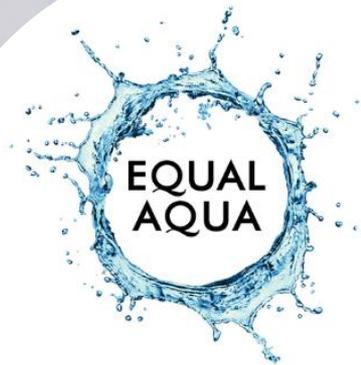


# Equal Aqua Partners Meeting

Hosted by GIZ and the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA)

05 May 2025

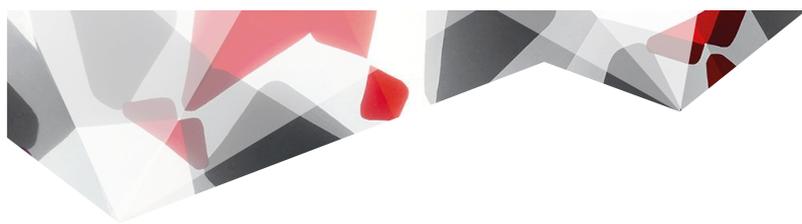


sustainable  
sanitation  
alliance



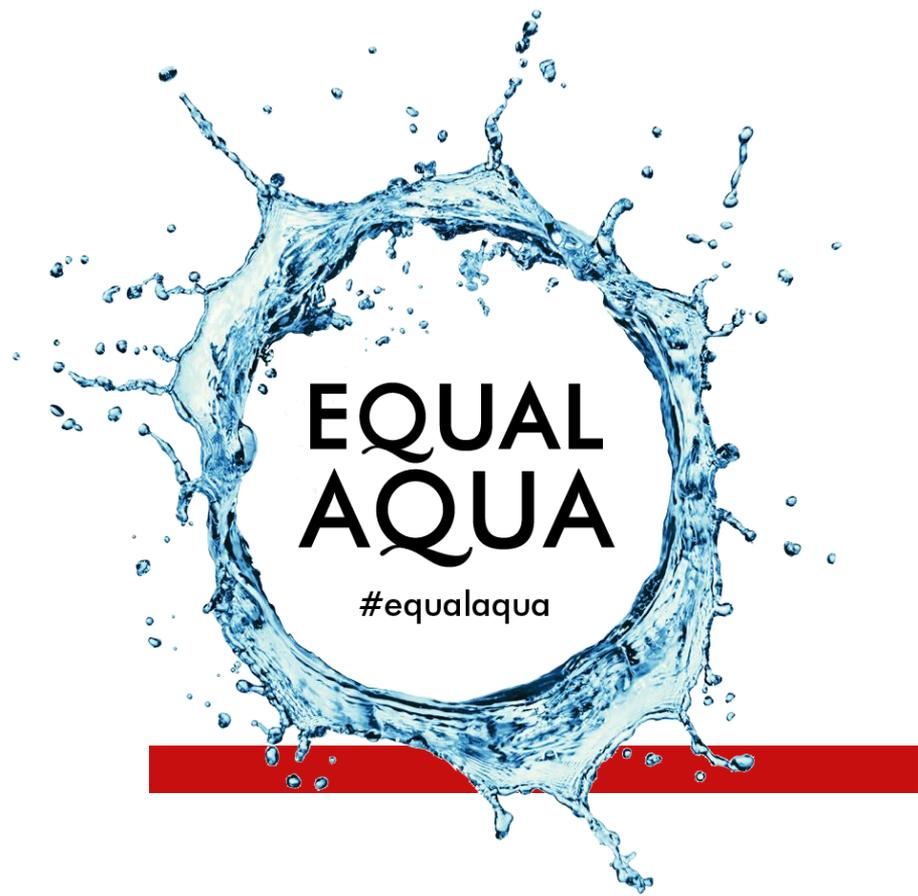
# Agenda

- 10 min Welcome and new partners
- 15 min Partner updates
- 10 min Opportunities for Equal Aqua in Water Operator Partnerships (Lisa Engler, GIZ)
- 5 min Water Operators Partnership Congress (Franziska Volk, GWOPA/UN-Habitat)
- 10 min Q&A
- 10 min Period-Positive Workplaces in WASH (Diana Nelson, Days for Girls & Period Positive Workplace initiative)
- 10 min Q&A
- 5 min Closing



# New Partners

**giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



# Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

- » We support the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of **international cooperation for sustainable development**.
- » With over **50 years of experience** in a wide variety of areas, including economic development and employment promotion, energy and water, and peace and security.
- » The **diverse expertise** of our federal enterprise is in demand – from the German Government, European Union institutions, the United Nations, the private sector, and governments of other countries.
- » Our 25,000 employees, almost 70 % of whom are national staff, are working with our partners on around **1,700 ongoing projects in about 120 countries**.
- » Germany is one of the **largest water donors worldwide**, main implementing agencies are KfW, BGR, and GIZ.

# GIZ Project Portfolio – Water and Sanitation (2023)

## 73 ongoing projects in 50 countries



Approx. **0,5 Mio.**  
people benefit from  
improved sanitation and  
treated wastewater

giz



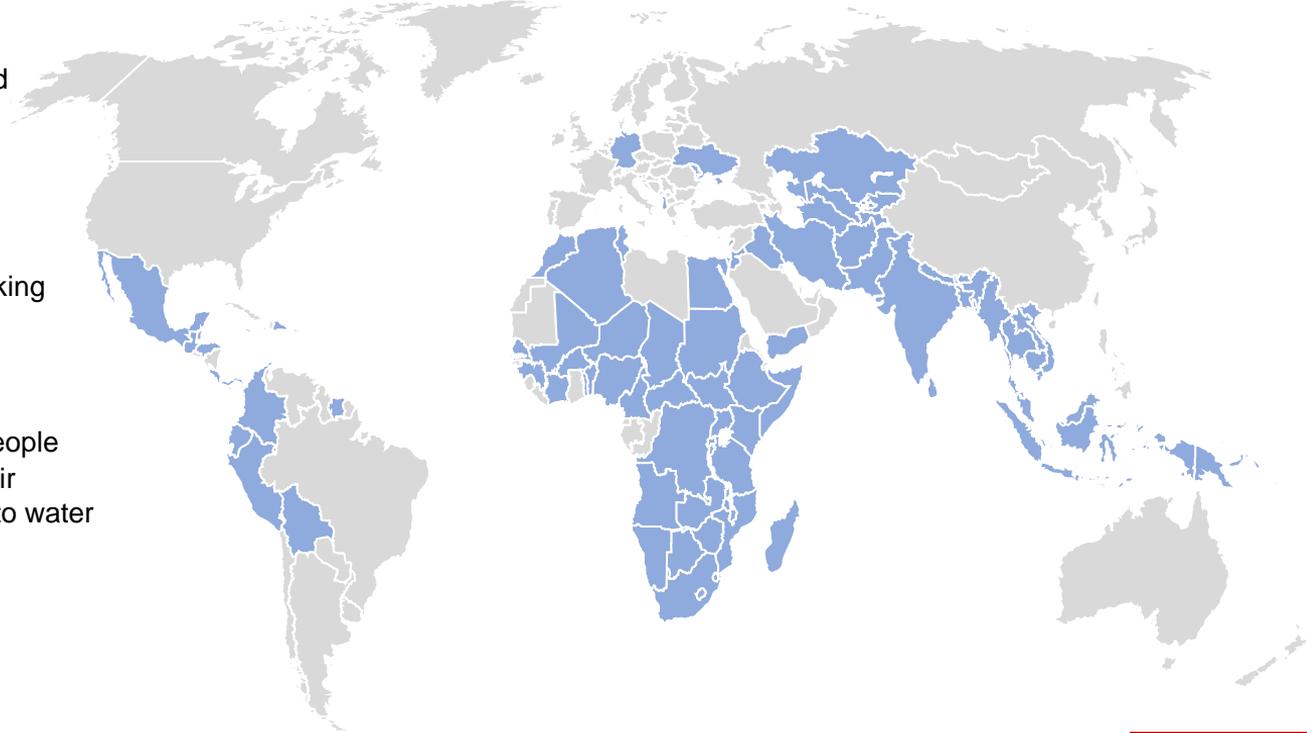
Over **0,4 Mio.**  
people have improved drinking  
water

giz



Nearly **0,7 Mio.** people  
have strengthened their  
resilience with regard to water  
scarcity

giz



# The Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA)

sustainable  
sanitation  
alliance



## Context:

- SuSanA is dedicated to achieving the SDGs through sustainable sanitation and hygiene management.
- **400+ partners** and **15,000+ members**



## What we are doing with our partners:

- Providing a platform for **coordination and collaborative work**
- contributing to **policy dialogue** through joint publications, meetings and initiatives
- serving as **sounding board** for the sector
- facilitating discourse, coordination, and shared learning



## What we have already achieved:

- transition from **MDG to SDG** by addressing the whole sanitation chain, not just toilets
- enhancing **local impact** and **international cooperation**
- active participation in global conferences amplifying **advocacy**
- **Stronger Together! Coalition:** Mentoring, career skills development, and networking for women in WASH

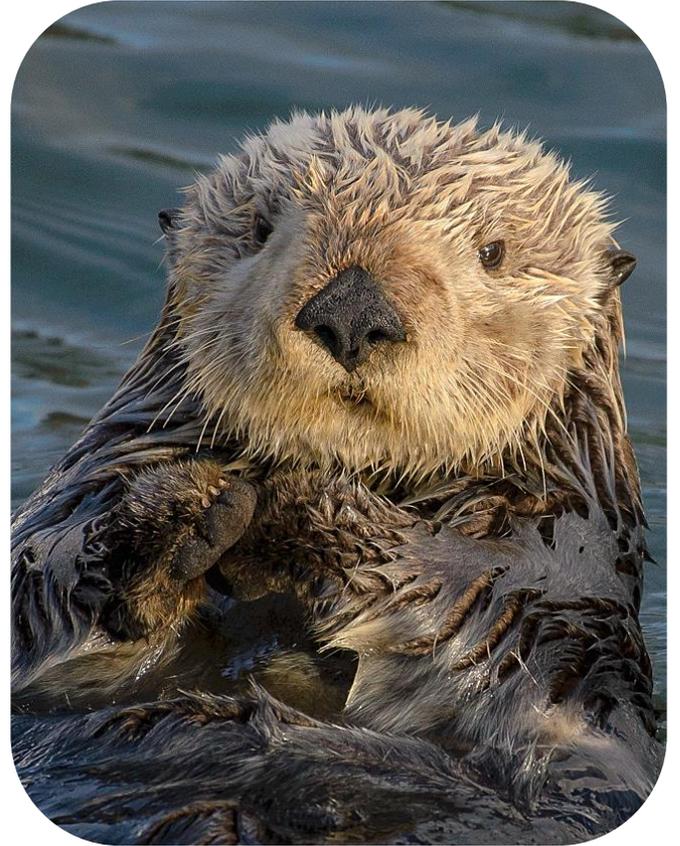


Equal Aqua Partners Meeting

## Partner Updates

Share your recent and upcoming activities, highlights, events, etc.

Optional: Or your favourite water animal ;)





# Opportunities for Equal Aqua in Water Operator Partnerships (Lisa Engler, GIZ)



## Utility Platform

For strengthening partnerships  
of municipal utilities worldwide

# EQUAL AQUA PARTNER MEETING

05.05.2025

*Lisa Engler, GIZ Utility Platform*

# WHAT IS THE GERMAN UTILITY PLATFORM? (1)

- The Utility Platform **finances Operator Partnerships Worldwide & Solidarity Operator Partnerships with Ukraine**
- The partnerships work on various technical and administrative topics, such as ***water loss reduction, energy efficiency, water quality management, digitalization, waste reduction and more.***
- The Utility Platform:
  - finances operator partnerships,
  - ensures connection to other development cooperation, EU and financial cooperation projects,
  - supports implementation and monitoring,
  - offers networking events, further trainings and knowledge exchanges for the employees of partner companies.



## WHAT IS THE GERMAN UTILITY PLATFORM? (2)

- **Project** implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (**GIZ**) on behalf of the **Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development** of Germany
- In cooperation with **SKEW** (Service Agency of Municipalities in One World), **VKU** (Association of Municipal Enterprises) and **GWP** (German Water Partnership)
- Duration 07/2024 – 06/2027 (Pilot Phase 07/2019 - 06/2024)

Implemented by



On behalf of



In cooperation with



and



with its



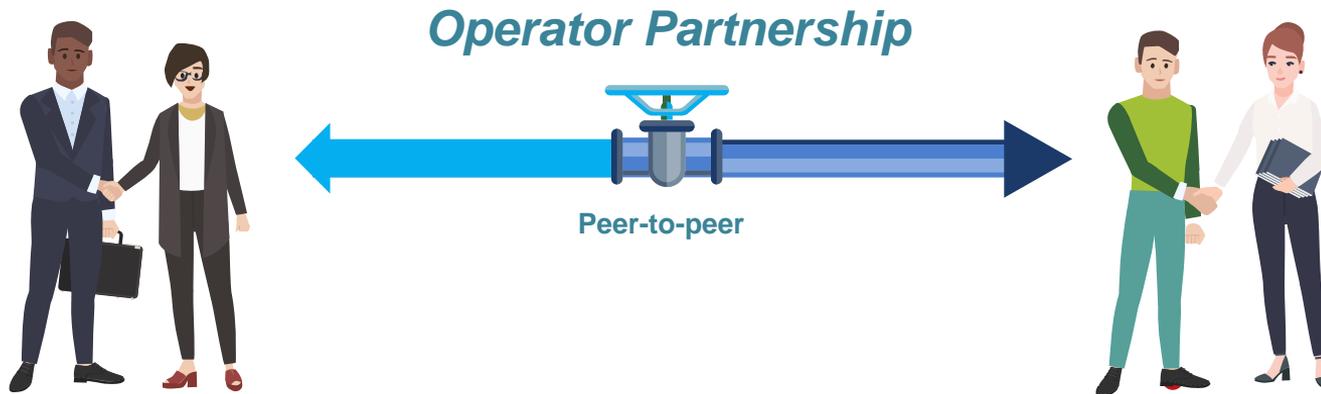
## OBJECTIVES OF THE UTILITY PLATFORM

- Strengthening competences in partner countries through the expertise of German municipal companies in public services -> **peer-to-peer; focus on capacity development not investment**
- Supporting Operator Partnerships as a new instrument of development cooperation
  - complement international development and financial cooperation efforts
  - improve access to investments: **fit for finance**
- Establishing structures **for long-term partnerships** on eye-level
- Contributing to achieving **SDG 6** "Clean Water and Sanitation," **SDG 11** "Sustainable Cities and Communities," and **SDG 17** "Partnerships for the Goals"
- Improving economic results of partner utilities; customers benefit



## WHAT ARE OPERATORS PARTNERSHIPS?

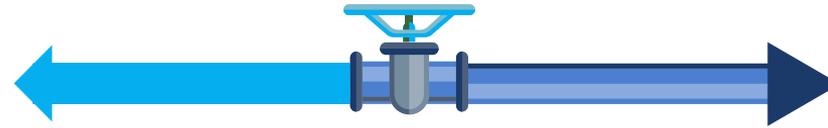
**Not-for-Profit** partnerships between two or more water and/or solid waste operators carried out in the objective of strengthening their **capacity** to sustainably provide quality **services** to everyone.



## PORTFOLIO OF THE UTILITY PLATFORM



### Operator Partnership



- 11 water operator partnerships
- 3 solid waste operator partnerships
- 11 solidarity operator partnerships with Ukrainian utilities



# Betreiberplattform

Zur Stärkung von Partnerschaften kommunaler Unternehmen weltweit

# Utility Platform | Betreiberplattform

# Utility Platform

For strengthening partnerships of municipal utilities worldwide



## Water Operator Partnerships (WOPs)

Hamburg Wasser, hanseWasser, Bremen	Miyahana, Amman, Jordan
Hamburg Wasser, Netze BW Wasser, Stuttgart	Kahama-Shinyanga Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (KASHWASA), Kahama Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (KUWASA), Tanzania
Hamburg Wasser	eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, Durban, South Africa (IGWOPA EU-WOP)
Oldenburgerisch-Ostfriesischer Wasserverband (OOVW), Brake Wuppervverband, Wuppertal	Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, East London, South Africa
LWG Lausitzer Wasser, Cottbus	Su Canal Comrat, Moldova
Stadtentwässerung Dresden	Apî-Canal Chişinău, Moldova

Stadtentwässerung Dresden, ZWAV Plauen, Fernwasser Versorgung Elbaue-Ostharz, Torgau	Luapula Water Supply and Sanitation Company, Mansa, Zambia (IGWOPA EU-WOP)
Ruhrverband, Essen, Energieversorgung Dornagen (evd), Technische Betriebe Dornagen,	Eastern Water and Sanitation Company, Chipata, Zambia
Gelsenwasser AG, Gelsenkirchen, Enschergerossenschaft/Lippeverband, Essen	Lukanga Water Supply and Sanitation Company, Kabwe, Zambia
Enschergerossenschaft/Lippeverband, Essen	Lusaka Water Supply and Sanitation Company, Lusaka, Zambia (EIB-financed)
Oldenburgerisch-Ostfriesischer Wasserverband (OOVW), Brake Wuppervverband, Wuppertal	Chambeshi Water and Sanitation Company, Kasama, Zambia

## Solidarity Operator Partnerships (Ukraine)

Zweckverband Wasser/Abwasser Bornaer Land, Borna	Irpivodokanal, Irpin, Ukraine
Enschergerossenschaft/Lippeverband, Essen	Zhytomyrvodokanal, Zhytomyr, Ukraine
Stadtentwässerung Dresden, Berliner Wasserbetriebe, Stadtentwässerungsbetriebe Köln	Lvivvodokanal, Lviv, Ternopilvodokanal, Ternopil, Nadvira vodokanal, Nadvira, Ukraine
Gelsenwasser AG, Gelsenkirchen	Kremenchukvodokanal, Kremenchuk, Ukraine
Oldenburgerisch-Ostfriesischer Wasserverband (OOVW), Brake	Miskvodokanal, Sumy, Chernihivvodokanal, Chernihiv, Ukraine

Bonn Netz	Khersonvodokanal, Kherson, Ukraine
Eigenbetrieb WABAU, Baruth/Mark	Husiatyn Vodokanal Service, Husiatyn, Ukraine
Hamburg Wasser	Kyivvodokanal, Kyiv, Ukraine

## Solid Waste Operator Partnerships

Bergischer Abfallwirtschaftsverband, Engelskirchen	Ecoservice-2022, Lubenskiy District, Ukraine
Entsorgungsbetriebe Lübeck	Sarandë, Cërrik, Albanien

## HAMBURG WASSER, HANSEWASSER – MIYAHUNA, AMMAN (JORDAN)



- Start of the partnership: **2021**
- The main focus areas of the partnership are **optimization of drinking water production, water quality and KPI system, wastewater and sludge management.**
- Highlight: While working on the optimization of drinking water production during the partnership, the dosing points for chemicals (coagulation metering room, polymer inlet flocculation), and filtration were improved. Among other technical impacts, this also resulted in **monthly average cost savings of around 30,000 EUR.**

# OPERATOR PARTNERSHIP RESULTS CHAIN



**ACTIVITIES**

**CAPACITY OUTCOMES**

**IMPACT**

# CAPACITY OUTCOMES – INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Level		Capacity outcome	Description
INDIVIDUAL		Enhanced knowledge and skills	Availability of human resources and the extent to which they have the required skills and knowledge to accomplish the work they have been assigned to.
		Increased motivation	Proactive tendencies to move towards goals, take needed action and persist until satisfaction is attained.
		Applied new knowledge and skills	Active use of the newly acquired knowledge and skills in daily practices.

## CAPACITY OUTCOMES – OPERATIONAL LEVEL

Level		Capacity outcome	Description
OPERATIONAL		Improved data and information	Updated information on the conditions of any part of the water utility system, be it related to physical infrastructure (e. g. pipes), management processes, (e. g. customer database) or otherwise.
		Better systems	Standardised policies, procedures, management and operational information systems and mechanisms that facilitate work.
		Improved organisational structure	Arrangement of functions and people into specific areas and levels of responsibility, decision making authority, communication and relationships to assure effective implementation of the organisation's mission and strategy.
		Better equipment/infrastructure	Tools and equipment necessary for utility operations and basic infrastructure for the business processes (e. g. water production and distribution).
		Improved management practices	Practices that managers use to mobilise the human and material resources at their disposal and advance the strategy, including managerial behaviour, work etiquette, professionalism, planning, communication and control.
		Improved working routines	The way the tasks are executed daily in consolidated routines.

## CAPACITY OUTCOMES – STRATEGIC LEVEL/OTHER

Level		Capacity outcome	Description
STRATEGIC		Improved vision, mission, strategy	The vision outlines the company's goal for the future and the values that define it. A mission states how the company will achieve its vision. Strategies are the ways in which the mission and vision will be reached.
		Additional resources	Additional (financial) resources via new acquisition or operational costs savings.
		Improved external relations	Improved communications with external stakeholders and customers. This includes stakeholder relations that the operator has forged and how such networks support the achievement of its strategy.
		More supportive organisational culture	Collection of rules, values and principles that are enduring and guide organisational behaviour.
		Better leadership	Managerial staff providing overall organisational direction and serving as behavioural role models for all employees.
OTHER		Any other Outcomes	

## GENDER AT UTILITY PLATFORM

- German and global stakeholders are working together to realize equal opportunities and rights for all people, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation or gender identity.
- This also includes the opportunity for everyone to participate in economic activities in the water and circular economy sector and to be provided with their services.
- Gender as a field of work in operator partnerships can be an exciting topic (mutual learning and exchange) and a lever against the shortage of skilled workers. International partners are often more advanced in this regard



**Lisa Engler**

Gender Focal Person of the Utility  
Platform

[lisa.engler@giz.de](mailto:lisa.engler@giz.de)



# DISCUSSION ON HOW TO MOTIVATE OUR PARTNERS FOR EQUAL AQUA

## First Ideas

- Sending an E-Mail – I don't expect many answers
- Virtual Event for our international and german partners – not many will actually participate
- Next opportunity in person: GWOPA WOPs Congress in Bonn October 27-29: How could we organize a session that is of interest for our operators?

## Questions from the Utility Platform

- What are your best practices on how to motivate partners for this „extra effort“?
- What data is needed more or is easier to get: From our international partners or from our German partners?



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# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION AND INTEREST!

## Utility Platform Website

[www.utility-platform.de/en](http://www.utility-platform.de/en)



## Newsletter

[www.utility-platform.de/en/media-centre/newsletter](http://www.utility-platform.de/en/media-centre/newsletter)

## LinkedIn

[www.linkedin.com/in/utility-platform](http://www.linkedin.com/in/utility-platform)





# Water Operators Partnership Congress (Franziska Volk, GWOPA)

# 6th Global Water Operators' Partnerships Congress



- Scheduled as part of 'Urban October'
- Hybrid with interpretation services
- Targeting at least 500 participants from public utilities, development banks, regulators, utility associations, local and national government officials, international organization and platforms, UN agencies, Academia, city networks
- Bonn World Conference Center

With support from:



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development



Federal Foreign Office

# 6th Global Water Operators' Partnerships Congress

## Congress Themes & Thematic Focus

### Solidarity in Action: Stronger Utilities for Thriving Cities

Climate  
Action &  
Resilience

Innovation

Leave no one  
behind

WOPs for  
Impact

Strengthening  
Finance &  
Enabling Utilities



# Collaboration for Gender Equality at the Congress – Focus Women in Water Utilities

- Stronger Together! Alliance and partners taking the lead on Women in Utilities Mentoring/Breakfast Session and other sessions
- 5<sup>th</sup> Congress had 6 Sessions on “Equity and Inclusion”
- “Empowering Voices Concept”
- FIRST IDEAS how Equal Aqua partners can elevate gender diversity at congress
  - **Framework for gender equality/Women in Water** – session/discussion framework
  - **Equal Aqua human resources (HR) survey** – workshop/training
  - **Breaking Barriers Database** - a visual exhibition and basis for discussions
  - ...



# 6th Global Water Operators' Partnerships Congress

## Key Timelines



### March-May

- Concept & call for co-creation of the programme
- Communication & advocacy
- Task force for the congress



### June- July

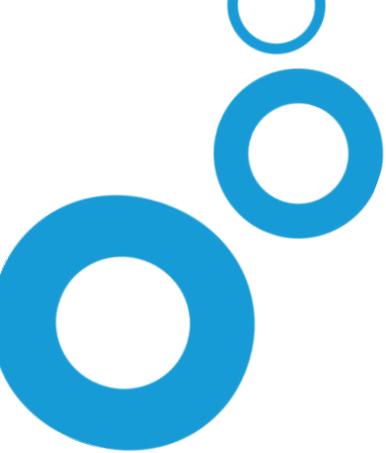
- Co-creation of the programme
- Logistics



### Aug-Sept.

- Finalizing travel & logistics and the programme





# Thank you!



<https://gwopa.unhabitat.org>





# Q&A



# Period-positive workplaces in WASH (Diana Nelson, Days for Girls)

PERIOD  
POSITIVE  
WORKPLACE



# Period Positive Workplaces: Advancing Menstrual Health and Equal Opportunity in the WASH Sector

PERIOD  
POSITIVE  
WORKPLACE

DAYS FOR  
 GIRLS



# DIANA NELSON

Global Advocacy Director  
Days for Girls International

# DAYS FOR GIRLS



Photo credit: Days for Girls

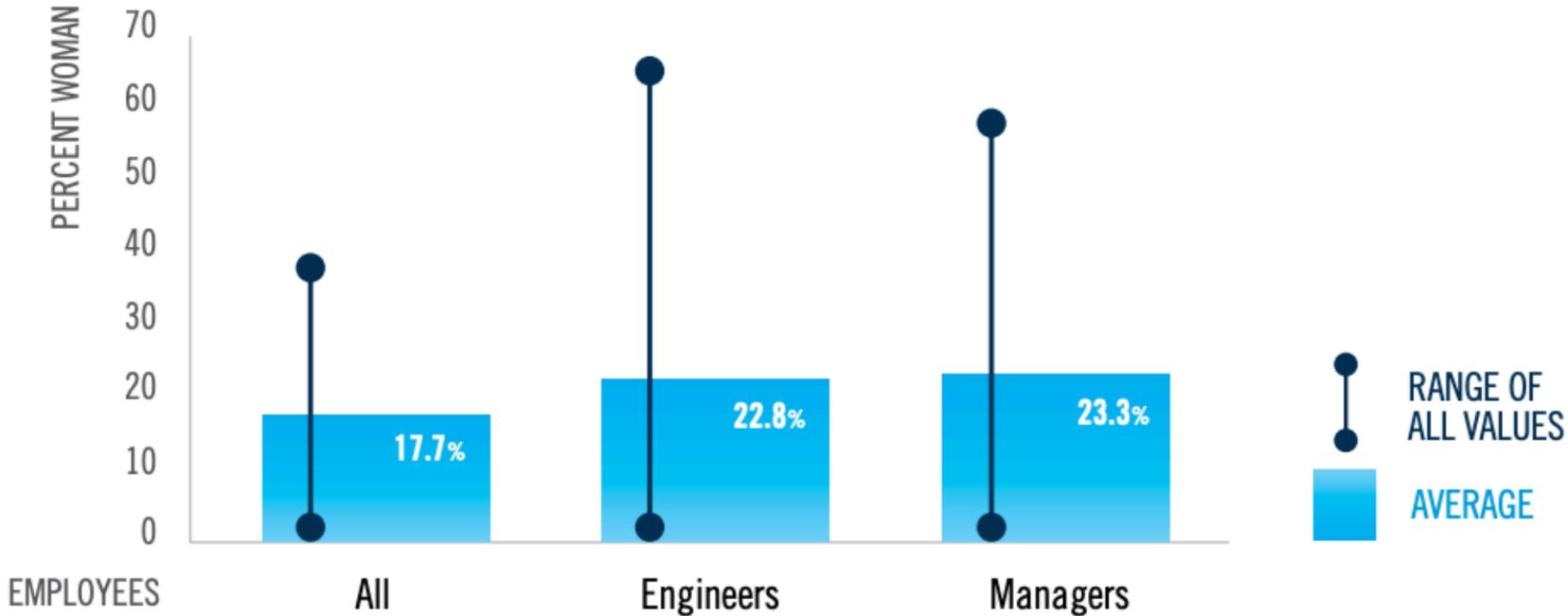


# AGENDA

- WOMEN IN THE WATER SECTOR: DATA & IMPACTS
- IMPACT OF WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE
- LESSONS LEARNED ON MENSTRUAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE
- PERIOD POSITIVE WORKPLACE INITIATIVE
- QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

# Women are Underrepresented in the Water Sector

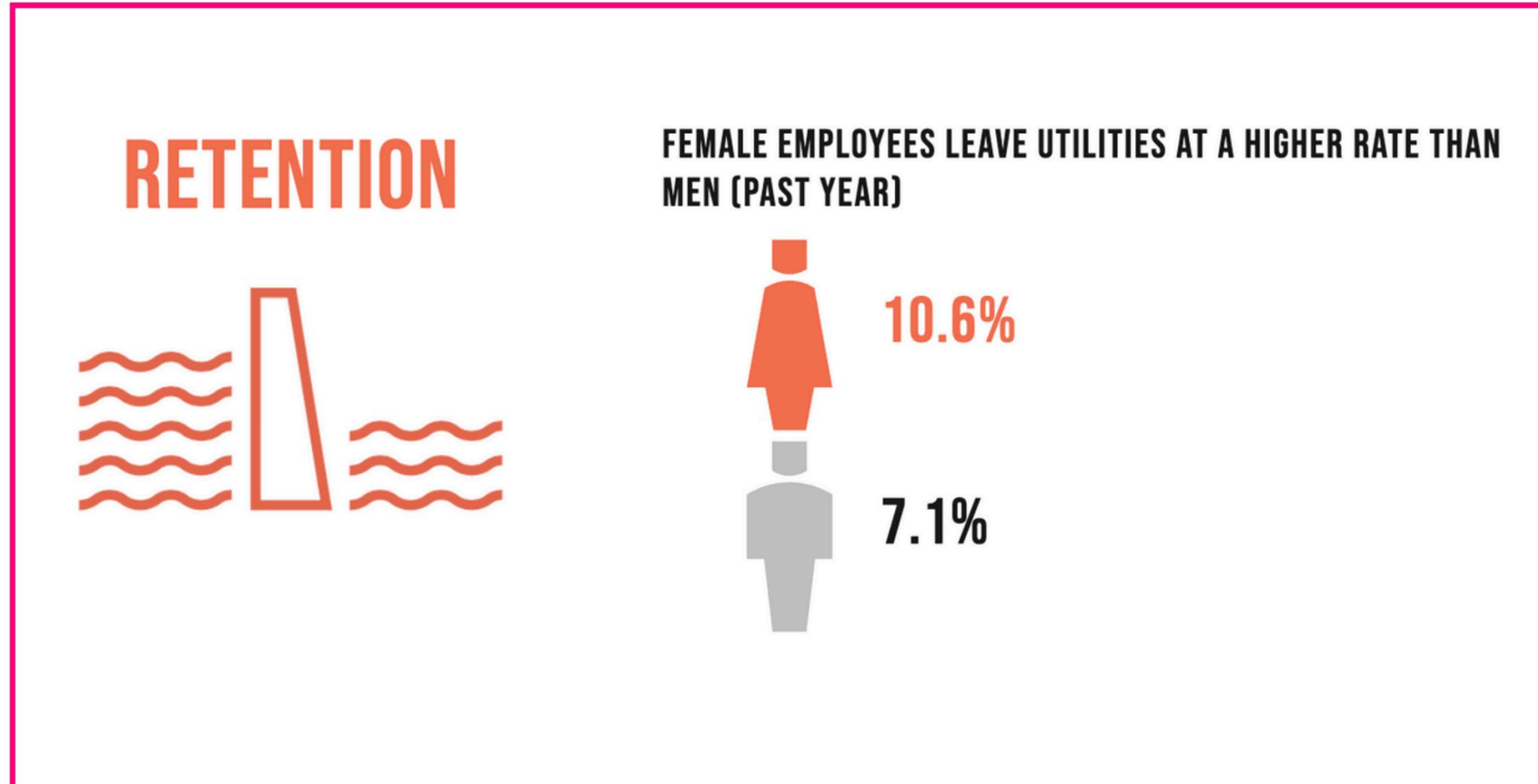
**FIGURE ES.1: AVERAGE SHARE OF EMPLOYEES IN A WATER UTILITY THAT ARE WOMEN, 2018–19**



Source: World Bank Utility Survey 2018–19.

Notes: Responses to the World Bank Utility Survey (N = 64 water and sanitation utilities in 28 economies). Bars show the utility average, and lines show the range of all values. Engineers are defined as licensed engineers working in the utility. Managers are employees in leadership positions and decision-making roles and can comprise upper-, middle-, and lower-level management.

# Retention of Women in the Water Sector



# Impact on Companies with Greater Gender Diversity

- **30%**

- Companies with **greater gender diversity** in their **leadership teams** **outperform** those with less by as much as 30%.

- **56%**

- Companies with the highest **percentage of women in executive committees** delivered 56% **better operating results** than those with all-male executives.

# Impact on Water Sector Companies

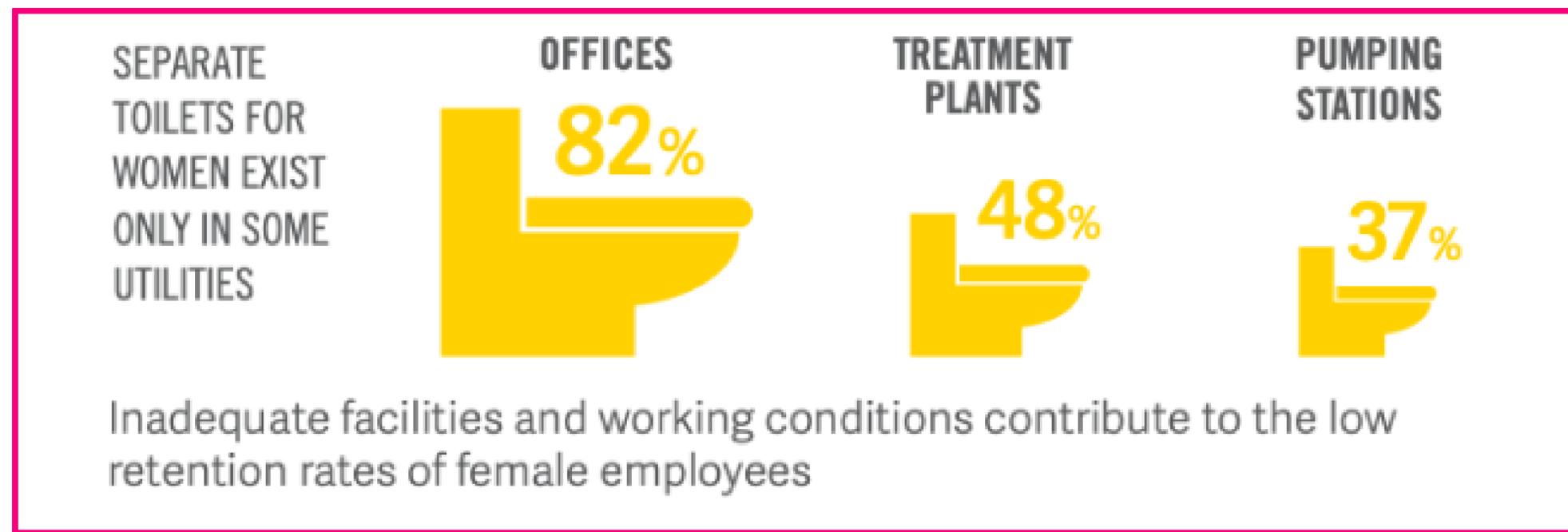
- **Gender gap in leadership**
  - In water management leadership at **all levels of government**-national, municipal, and local-including water utilities and community governance groups.
- **Limited decision-making**
  - Women are **rarely involved in decisions** about water policies, resource management, tariff setting, or technology choices, and are **missing from key areas of water-related decision-making**.
- **Impact of inclusion**
  - Involving women in water projects can **increase** their **effectiveness six- or seven-fold**.

# Why Women Leave or Are Not Taking Water Jobs

- Stigma and Stereotypes
  - Biased hiring processes
  - Low number of women graduating in STEM fields
  - Some cases, legally prohibited from being hired in the water sector
  - Wage Gaps
- 
- Lack of work-life balance
  - Inadequate family-friendly policies
  - Sexual harassment

# Why Women Leave or Are Not Taking Water Jobs

- Work facilities in the water sector do not cater to the needs of women (note other sectors have similar trends)
- Unsupportive workplace environment

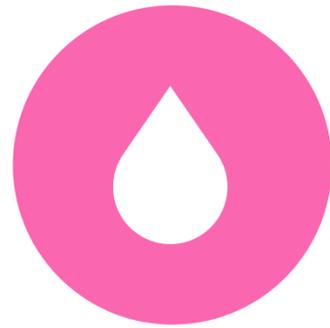


**LESSONS LEARNED ON MENSTRUAL  
HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE  
GLOBALLY**

# MENSTRUAL HEALTH



**EDUCATION &  
INFORMATION**



**FACILITIES &  
SERVICES**



**POSITIVE  
ENVIRONMENT**



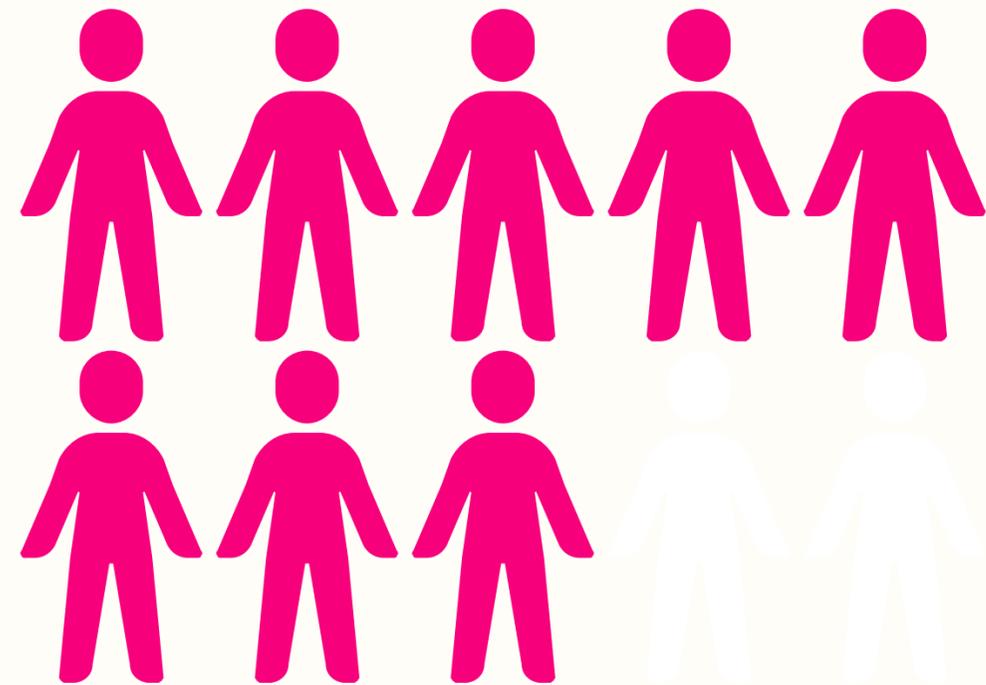
**CARE &  
TREATMENT**



**FREEDOM**

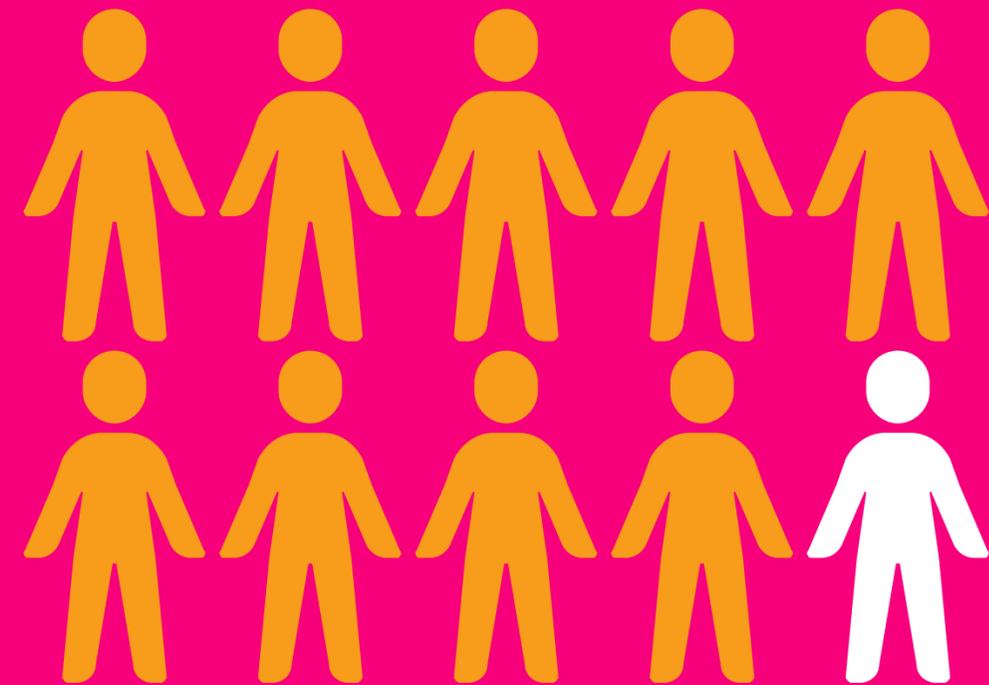
# 8 OUT OF 10

women have started their period unexpectedly, and 96% leave immediately for period products (Free the Tampons).



# 9 OUT OF 10

employees who menstruate feel stress or anxiety about their period in the workplace (Bloody Good Period).



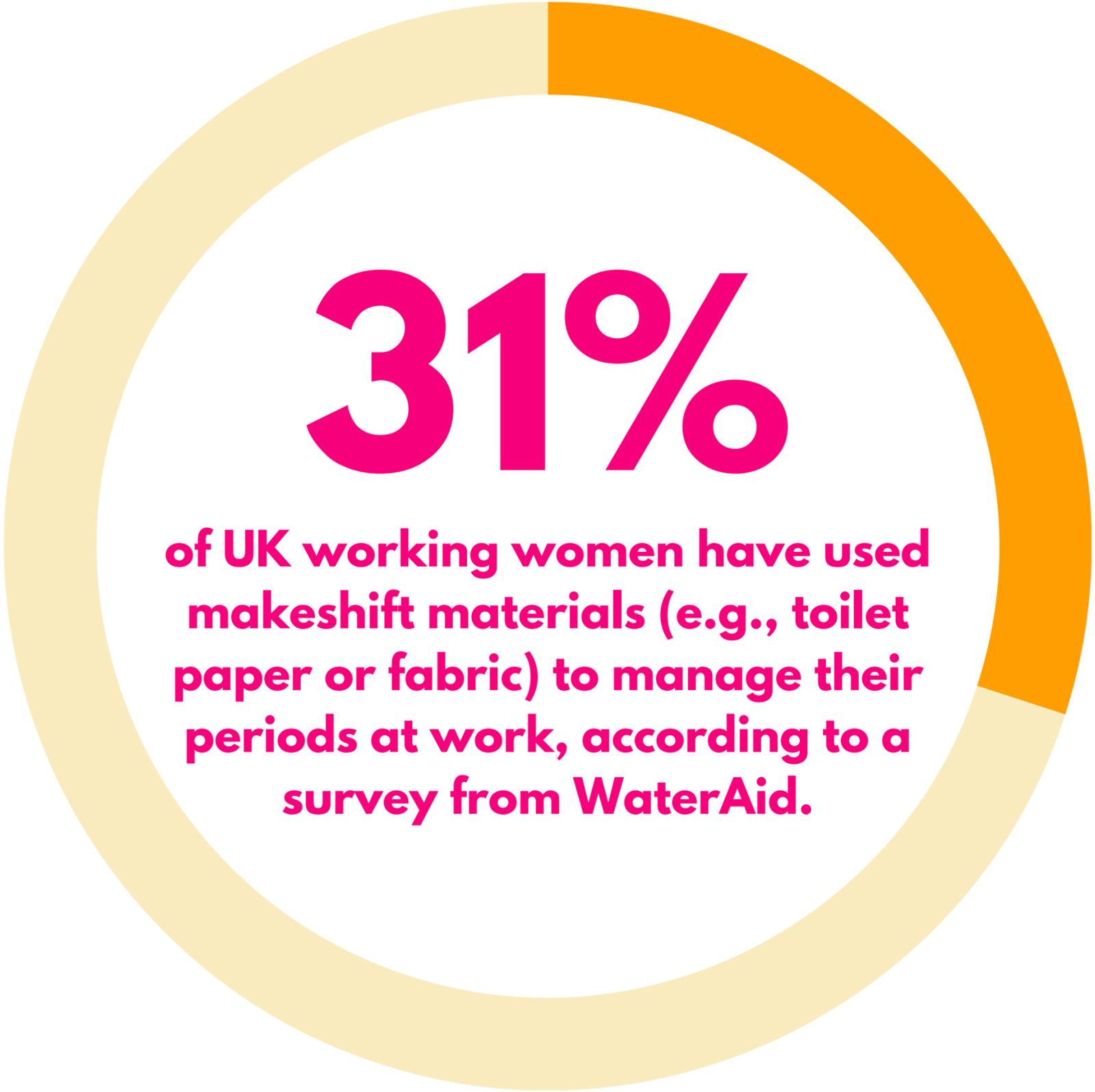
# MENSTRUAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

3%



of employees believe their employers do enough to support people who menstruate at their workplace (Water Aid)



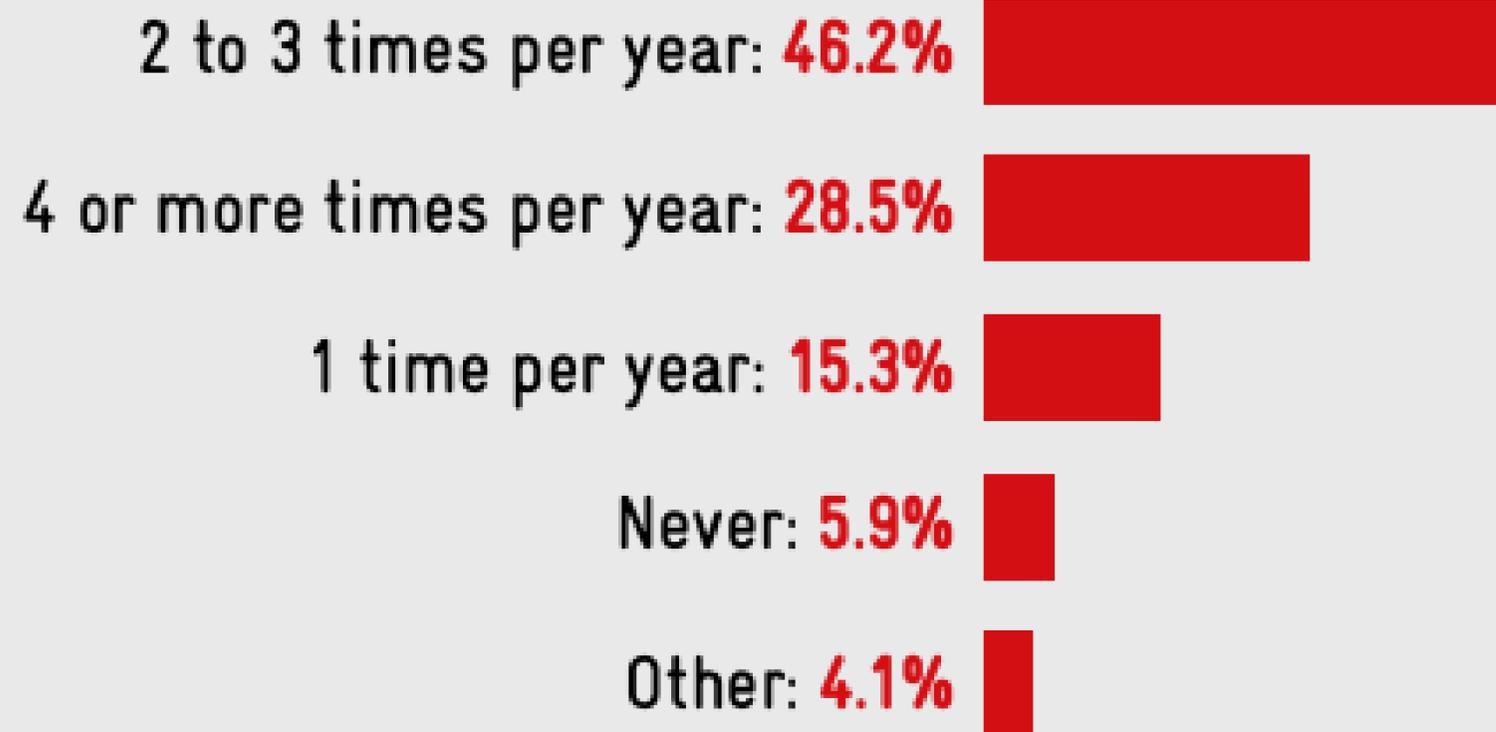


**31%**

**of UK working women have used makeshift materials (e.g., toilet paper or fabric) to manage their periods at work, according to a survey from WaterAid.**

# Data from GLZ

How many times a year are you unexpectedly surprised by your period during work (n = 829)?



# **COSTS OF IGNORING MENSTRUAL HEALTH**



**HEALTH  
CHALLENGES**



**SHAME &  
ISOLATION**



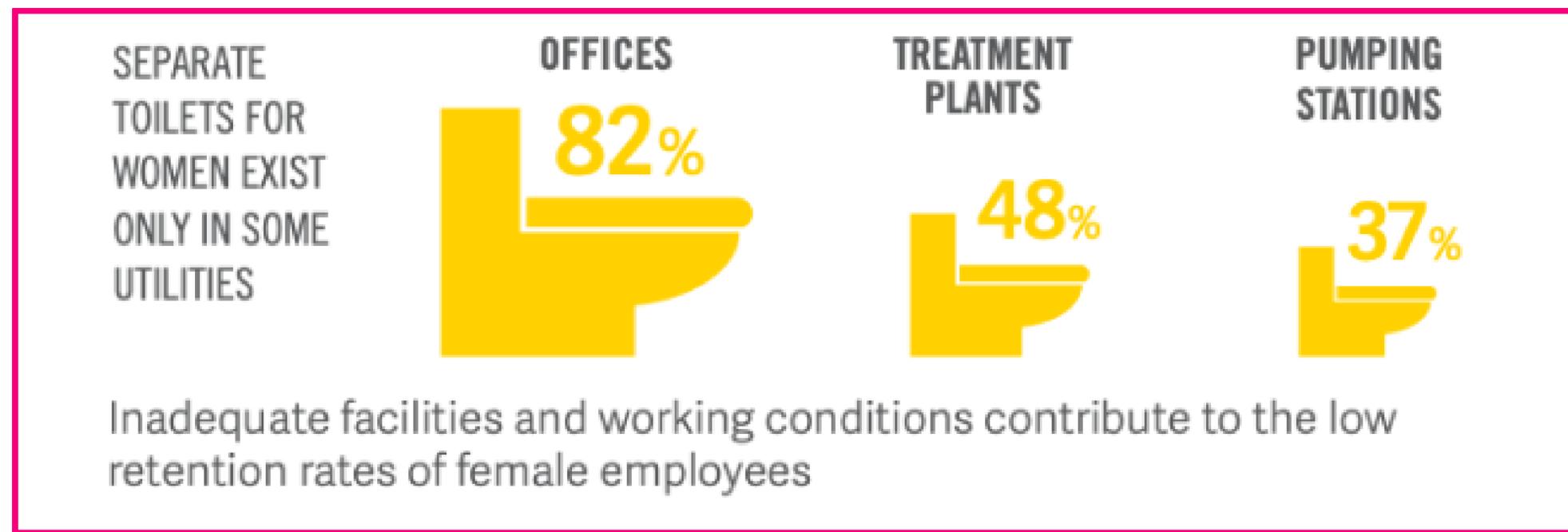
**PRESENTEEISM  
& ABSENTEEISM**



**DECREASED  
PRODUCTIVITY**

# Why Women Leave or Are Not Taking Water Jobs

- Work facilities in the water sector do not cater to the needs of women (note other sectors have similar trends)
- Unsupportive workplace environment



**One Solution: Create Supportive Environments at Work**

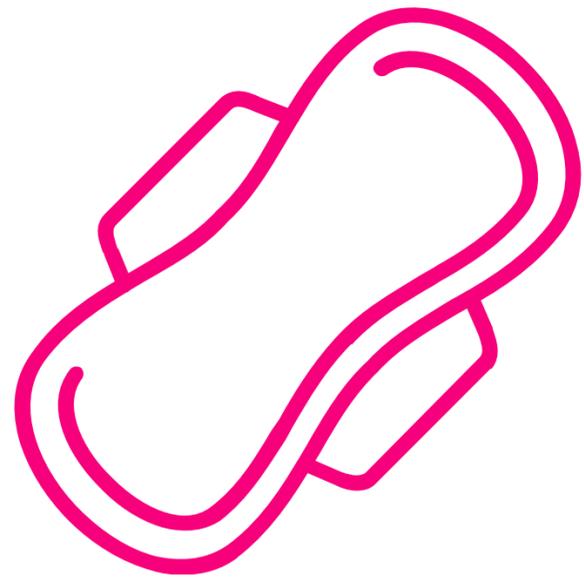
PERIOD  
POSITIVE  
WORKPLACE

# WHAT IS THE PERIOD POSITIVE WORKPLACE INITIATIVE?

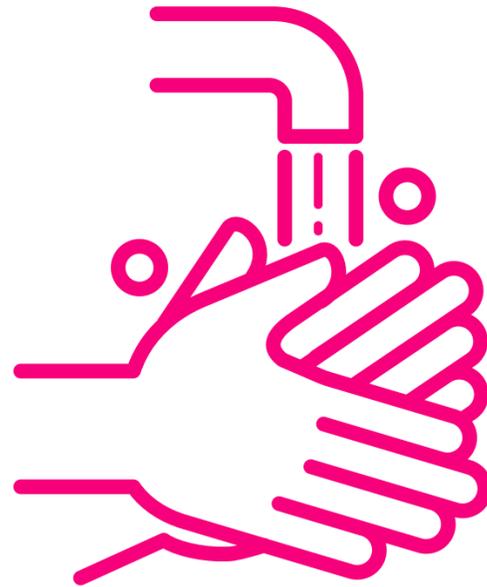
The Period Positive Workplace (PPW) initiative is a global effort to create more inclusive, gender equitable workplaces through the provision of menstrual health resources at work.



# PERIOD POSITIVE WORKPLACE



**Provide free  
menstrual products  
to employees**



**Meet WASH facility  
standards in  
bathrooms**



**Announce  
certification to  
employees**

**INCEPTION**

**2:1 ROI**



# A RETURN ON INVESTMENT

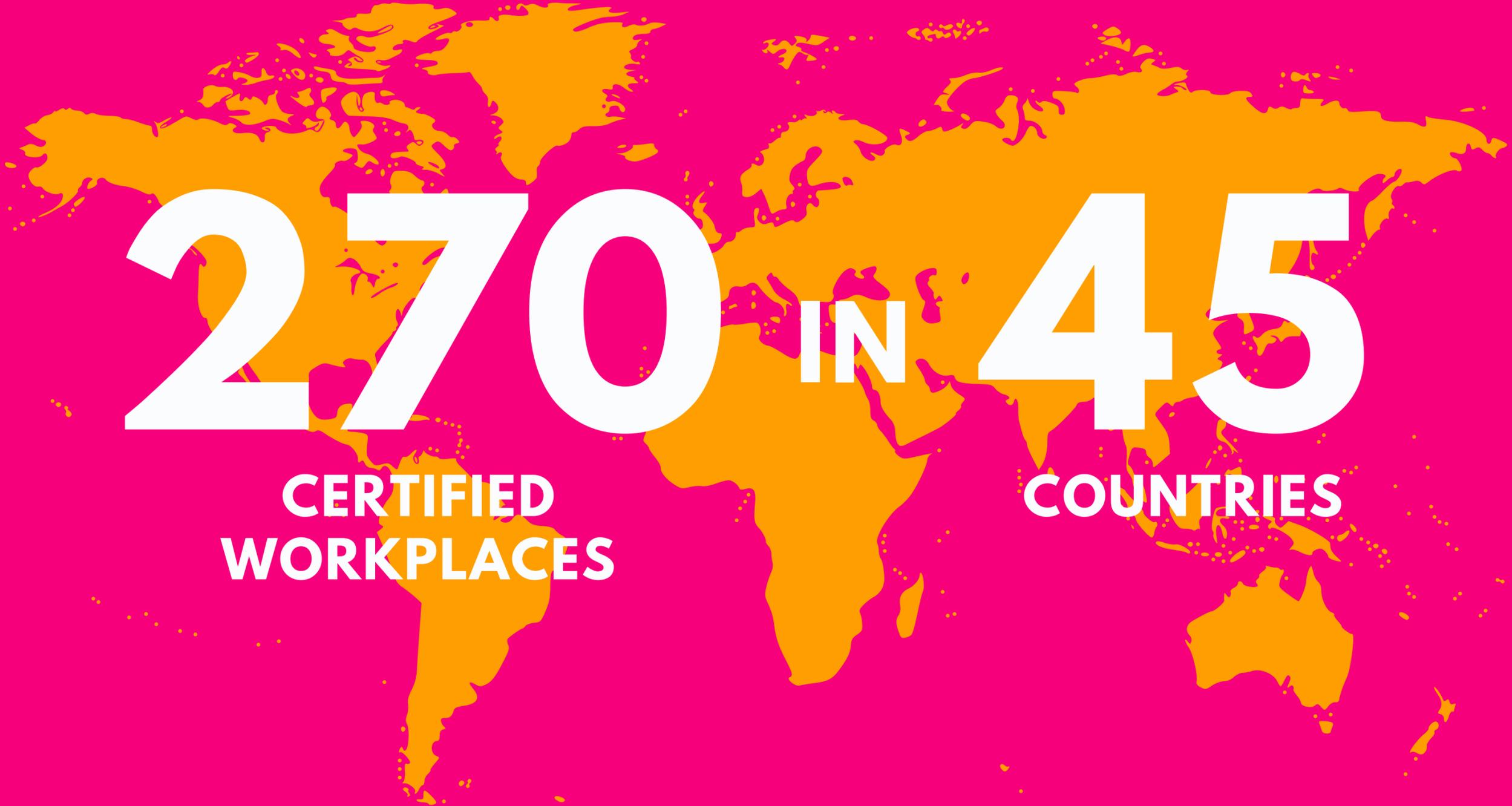


The average annual cost is only estimated at 5-10% of the organization's toilet paper budget.



Workplaces report reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, & more collaboration among menstruating employees.

# PERIOD POSITIVE WORKPLACES



**270** IN **45**

**CERTIFIED  
WORKPLACES**

**COUNTRIES**



## WHAT PERIOD POSITIVE WORKPLACES (PPWS) ARE SAYING

---

- Only **15%** of employee respondents said their experience managing menstruation at work was **“easy” or “very easy”** **before** their workplace became a PPW. **After** their workplace **became a PPW**, this number **increased to 80%**.
- **93%** said the PPW **provided peace of mind** regarding unexpected periods

# What period Positive Workplaces (PPWs) are saying

2025 SURVEY RESULTS

## EMPLOYEE SURVEY KEY FINDINGS

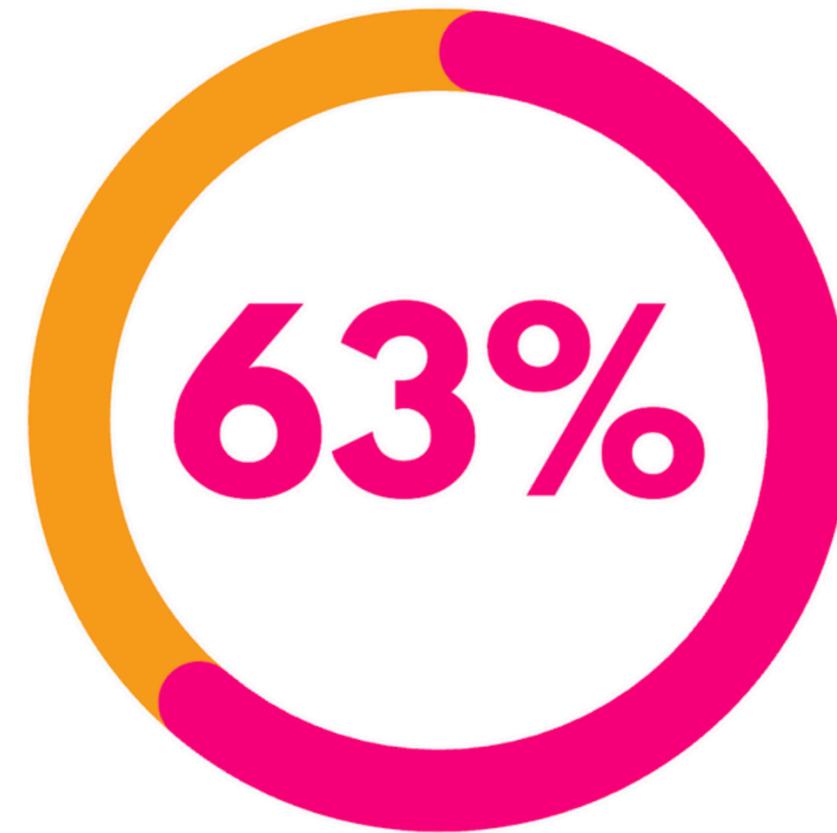
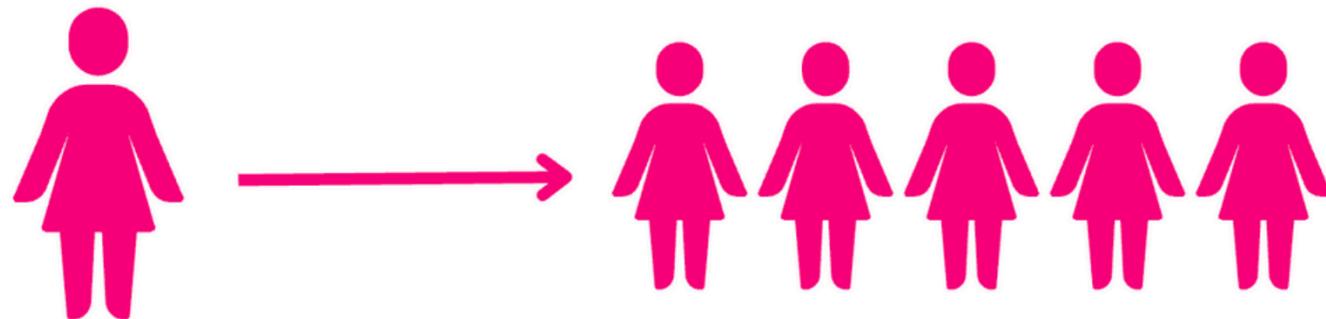


### Benefits of the Period Positive Workplace Initiative

Of the 84 employees who menstruate:

↑↑↑ 5X

MORE EMPLOYEES REPORT EASE IN MANAGING MENSTRUATION AT WORK AFTER THEIR ORGANIZATION BECAME A PERIOD POSITIVE WORKPLACE



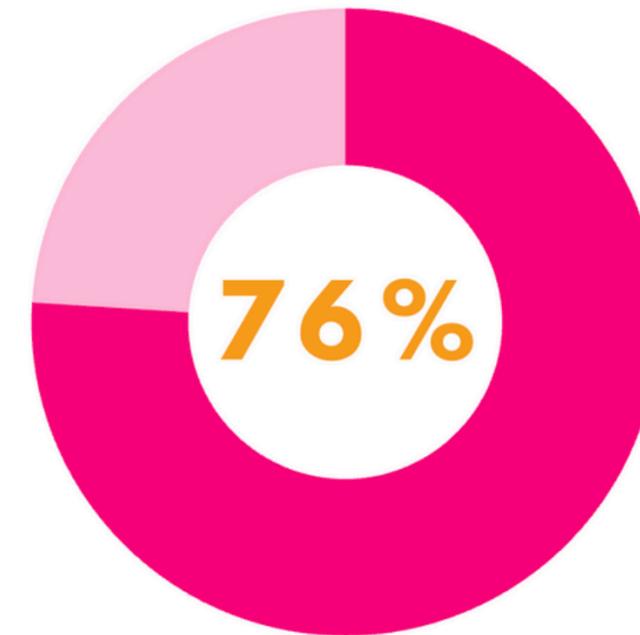
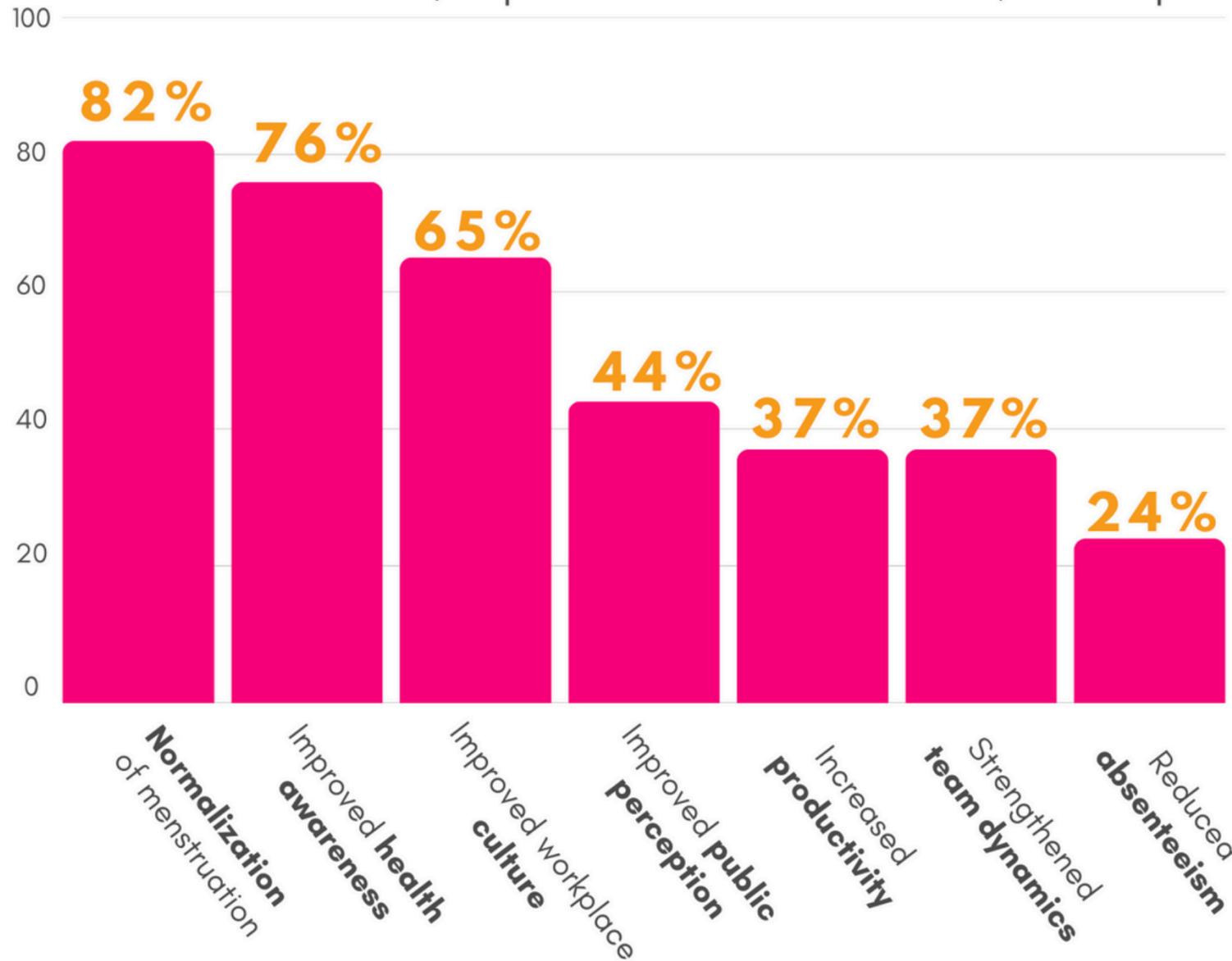
of employees say the Period Positive Workplace initiative positively impacted their productivity

# WHAT PPWS ARE SAYING



## Benefits of the Period Positive Workplace Initiative

More than 50% of managers reported benefits including normalization of menstruation, improved health awareness, and improved workplace culture.



agreed the PPW initiated **new conversations about menstruation** at their organization



Providing free period products is one of the **lowest cost, highest impact** efforts we have made to support people who menstruate in our [office].

**EXECUTIVE AT A PERIOD  
POSITIVE WORKPLACE**



# Action Equal Aqua Can Do Take to Address Menstrual Health in the Workplace

- Offer the PPW as another tool in your resources
  - Resources already curated
  - Webinar to increase awareness
  - Network of others doing this
- Check if the Equal Aqua HR survey assesses how organizations address menstruation in the workplace

# THANK YOU



*Diana Nelson, [diana@daysforgirls.org](mailto:diana@daysforgirls.org)  
Days for Girls, Global Advocacy Director*



# Q&A

# Contacts



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