



**Make menstrual health and hygiene a global priority!**

**MenstruAction**  
From Enthusiasm to Action

**#WeAreCommitted**  
How the GIZ Staff Initiative joined the Global MHH Movement



**2026**

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

Partner of

**Global Menstrual Collective**

**PERIOD POSITIVE WORKPLACE**

# THANK YOU

The GIZ staff initiative MenstruAction is delighted that Louisa Ameyo Agossivi Sedjro, First Deputy Chair of the GIZ Supervisory Board, and Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven, Vice Chair of the GIZ Management Board, as well as the Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Dr. Bärbel Kofler, show their commitment to this important issue – together with around 700 colleagues from more than 40 countries.

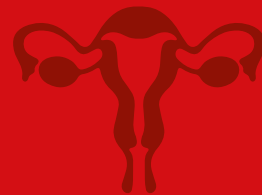


Louisa Ameyo Agossivi Sedjro,  
First Deputy Chair of the GIZ Supervisory Board



Dr. Bärbel Kofler, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (left) and Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven, Vice Chair of the GIZ Management Board (right)

# More than 10 Years of MenstruAction FROM ENTHUSIASM TO ACTION



This brochure illustrates the journey of the GIZ staff initiative MenstruAction from its beginnings until today. Some of the successes we achieved were inspired through our exchange and joint activities. We thank all of those who contributed!

It all started in 2015 with a loose collaboration between colleagues from the education, health, gender and WASH sector. In 2018 this exchange became more formalized, through a series of exchange meetings on Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH). The meetings were jointly organised by the Sector Programme Sustainable Sanitation, the Support to the Health Sector Programme in Nepal and a diverse group of dedicated colleagues. This group of colleagues and the related exchange format on MHH became the nucleus for the GIZ staff initiative MenstruAction. The multi-sectoral group organized a range of exchange meetings and networking events within and outside of GIZ.

From the start the colleagues reached out to other networks such as the Global Menstrual Collective, the MHH Partner's Alliance Nepal and the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA), to other initiatives led by organisations like UNICEF, Columbia University or the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and to change makers like the famous Indian Pad Man, Arunachalam Muruganantham. Last but not least, the German NGO WASH United, which invented the Menstrual Hygiene (MH) Day in 2014 and has been hosting the global secretariat since then, was a key partner from the very beginning. Bringing together interested GIZ colleagues, working in different sectors and countries with prominent stakeholders around the topic from within and outside GIZ helped us break the taboo around MHH and to either incorporate or strengthen MHH measures in a range of programmes and activities.

The exchange helped us to be more creative and generate ideas for joint activities around the MH Day and to involve more and more colleagues from a growing range of programmes and countries. In addition, the exchange on MHH allowed for mutual learning from each other and helped spread good ideas among the colleagues involved.

MHH has proven to be an intersectoral topic that needs cross-fertilization between a range of approaches and perspectives including the involvement of colleagues from programmes on sexual and reproductive health and rights, school health, WASH and gender equality and empowerment programmes, education, values and religion as well as waste management/circular economy.

In addition, an impressive number of interested colleagues also joined the initiative and the meetings out of enthusiasm for the topic as such and despite weak or no direct work-related links to the topic. We aim at further mainstreaming the topic in the coming years and invite you to contact us and to join the initiative! After all, our work on MHH truly reflects GIZ's new Gender Strategy 2025–2029 vision: 'United in promoting gender equality and equal opportunities at GIZ and around the world.'

**#WeAreCommitted  
GET IN TOUCH WITH US!**

If you are planning an initiative linked to or focusing on MHH please contact us via: [MenstruAction@giz.de](mailto:MenstruAction@giz.de)  
We are trying to bring together all those interested in the topic and to allow for knowledge exchange and cross fertilization. We could e.g. include your initiative or idea in one of the upcoming meetings.

## From Evidence to Action: Tackling women's health risks by ensuring menstrual product safety

### MENSTRUAL PRODUCT SAFETY IN THE SPOTLIGHT: MOVING FROM EVIDENCE TO ACTION ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

New findings on metals in menstrual products raise troubling questions about potential risks for women's health. An event on the sidelines of the World Health Summit in Berlin, October 2025, brought together groups working to ensure that women everywhere have access to menstrual products that are safe, affordable and environmentally sustainable.

How safe are the products which women around the world rely on every month to manage their periods? The short answer is: no one really knows, but there is a growing community of people determined to find out. This was one of the main takeaways from the event. The gathering was organised by the Gates Foundation, Siemens Stiftung, The Sanitation and Hygiene Fund, and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), working on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

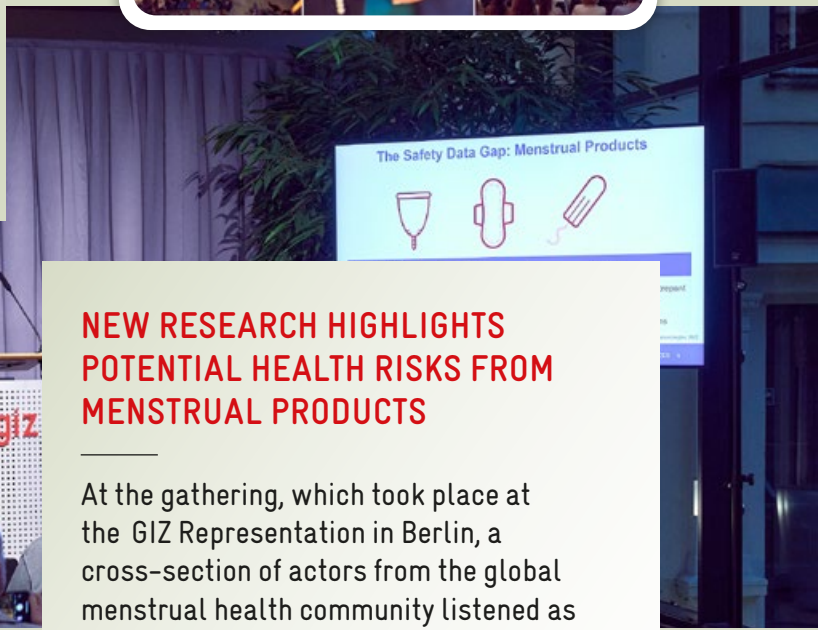
> [health.bmz.de](https://health.bmz.de): <https://bit.ly/3M7F2jQ>



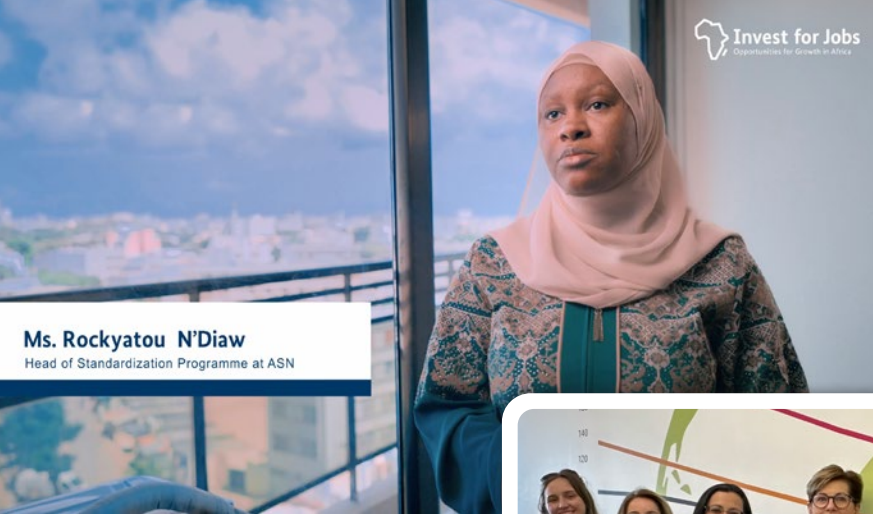
### NEW RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS POTENTIAL HEALTH RISKS FROM MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS

At the gathering, which took place at the GIZ Representation in Berlin, a cross-section of actors from the global menstrual health community listened as Dr Kathrin Schilling, Assistant Professor at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, presented results from recent research into metals in menstrual products. What she and her team have found is unsettling: metals – including toxic ones, such as lead, uranium and antimony – are present in menstrual products sourced from more than 30 countries across the globe.

> Youtube: <https://bit.ly/4aY7JK6>



"Every year we understand more about the connection between menstrual health and broader health. It's exciting to see how decades of work has gotten us to this moment of acceleration."  
DR RU-FONG JOANNE CHENG, DIRECTOR,  
WOMEN'S HEALTH INNOVATIONS, GATES FOUNDATION



**Ms. Rockyatou N'Diaw**  
Head of Standardization Programme at ASN

LEFT: Rockyatou N'Diaw, Head of Standardization Programme at the Association Sénégalaise de Normalisation (ASN)

> vimeo.com: <https://bit.ly/4rCWpZm>

MIDDLE, f.l.t.r.: 06/2025 – Menstrual Health Funders Convening, London: Daphne Manolakos (GIZ MenstruAction), Mónica Ferro (Director of UNFPA's London Representation Office), Anita Zaidi (President, Gender Equality Division, Gates Foundation), Wendy Anderson (Co-Founder/Partner, The Case for Her), Helga Mahler (GIZ Project Director and PANORAMA Partnership Coordinator)

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4s330AW>



*'Women are not dying of diseases we cannot treat. They are dying because societies have yet to decide that their lives are worth saving.'*

- Professor Mahmoud Fatallah

## GLOBAL STANDARDS WILL UNLOCK MARKETS IN LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

Local manufacturers have trouble getting their menstrual products to markets, and distributors struggle to import innovative products, because there are no global standards which indicate if a product is safe.

The good news is that momentum is building behind ISO Technical Committee 338, which is working to develop the first global standards for menstrual product quality, safety and performance. With support from the Gates Foundation, The Sanitation and Hygiene Fund, and GIZ's Alliance for Product Quality in Africa, more than 55 countries are now participating in the standards development. It is expected that the first voluntary standards will be finalised by mid-2027.

> shfund.org: <https://bit.ly/4rPHAmk>

# AIMING FOR SOLUTIONS



## FROM PROMISING IDEAS TO SUSTAINABLE BUSINESSES – AND SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS

The Female Health and Hygiene Accelerator supports startups in the menstrual health sector in Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda so they can grow sustainably, create qualified jobs, scale their solutions, and become investment-ready. This enables them to effectively address the challenges in this important sector.

The 18-month programme is hosted by cewas with support by the Siemens Stiftung and the BMZ (through the Agency for Business and Economic Development and the Special Initiative 'Decent Work for a Just Transition'), among others.

> fhha.creation.camp: <https://bit.ly/4ja0xvh>



Amdiya Abdul Latiff is the founder of Eco-Me Africa, that has created 25 jobs, produced 200,000 pads and avoided an estimated 3.5 million kilograms of waste. She aims to establish the first reusable pad factory in Ghana and to expand distribution into other parts of West Africa.



**JOIN THE MOVEMENT**

**NEW PANORAMA LEARNING COMMUNITY ON PLASTIC-FREE, PLANT-BASED MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS**

We are convening an evidence-based learning community to strengthen and scale plastic-free, plant-based menstrual products as a dual-benefit pathway: improved menstrual health outcomes and reduced plastic pollution. Building on documented PANORAMA Solutions and partner practices, the group developed a Theory of Change linking key leverage points across production, affordability, acceptance, and enabling policy and market frameworks to environmental and social impact.

09/2025: An initial workshop in Nairobi brought together around 30 stakeholders (entrepreneurs, government representatives, and funders) and launched concrete scaling workstreams, including the Sparša Blueprint as a replicable model for biodegradable pad production.

- > <https://panorama.solutions/en/organisation/nidisi>
- > educationnews.co.ke: <https://bit.ly/4atlwqb>
- > LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4qfspBk>

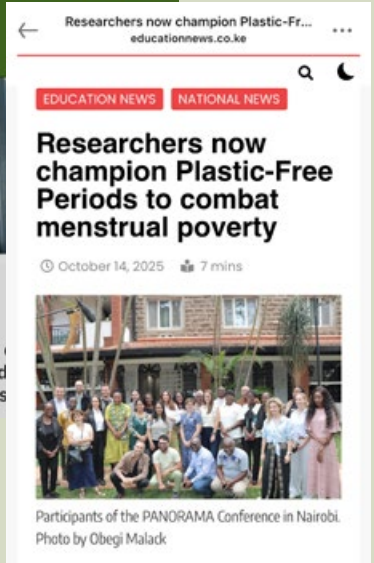
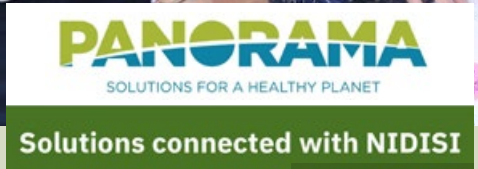


PHOTO TOP, f.l.t.r.: Sophia Grinvalds (MH Marketplace Maturity Measurement Advisor, The Sanitation and Hygiene Fund), Wendy Anderson (Co-Founder and Partner, The Case for Her), Samuel Thuo Mungai (Co-Founder, Ziada Solutions), Rachael Kerubo (Director, Kerry WASH Innovations)

“...COMBAT MENSTRUAL POVERTY AND PROTECT THE PLANET...?”





## GERMAN SUSTAINABILITY AWARD: Periods@Work NOMINATED

The German Sustainability Award is one of the most prestigious awards for ecological and social commitment in Europe. It recognises those who actively drive change and successfully implement sustainable solutions in everyday business.

GIZ's Periods@Work is nominated for the category 'Strengthening Health – Initiatives that prevent illness and promote well-being'.

We also really enjoyed attending the award ceremony, meeting Dr. Eckart von Hirschhausen (co-sponsor of the award), and talking about how health and sustainability belong together.

- > LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4b6dBR4>
- > LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4rBll3i>
- > LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4cNGouZ>

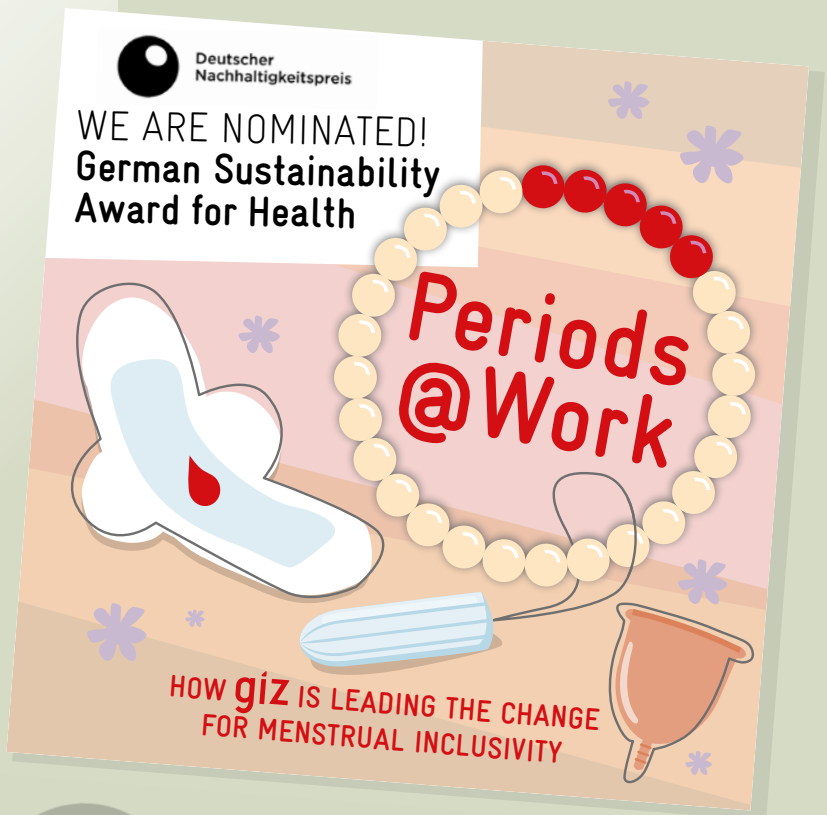


PHOTO TOP LEFT: Joint booth with GIZ's Equal Opportunities Team promoting sustainable menstrual-cycle health at GIZ Bonn (and Eschborn) – as part of the German Sustainability Action Days 2025. Aissa Giering, Elke Hüttner, Kristin Poggenburg and Daphne Manolacos (f.l.t.r.)

PHOTO TOP RIGHT: Session on the German Sustainability Award for Health. Helga Mahler, Jan Schlenk, Daphne Manolacos together with Dr Eckart von Hirschhausen, Founder of the Stiftung Gesunde Erde – Gesunde Menschen (Healthy Planet – Healthy People) (f.l.t.r.)



Deutscher Nachhaltigkeitspreis

GLOBAL  
**DISABILITY**  
SUMMIT



## GLOBAL DISABILITY SUMMIT 2025 – A PERIOD-FRIENDLY CONFERENCE

04/2025: Setting a precedent by collaborating with the Berlin startup VYLD, which produces sustainable tampons and pads from seaweed. Providing menstrual products for emergencies at conferences and all other events is a low-barrier and cost-effective way to make an event more inclusive and sustainable.

12/2025: The Global Programme Food and Nutrition Security followed suit, making its conference period-positive as well.

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/45EnQZY>

JOIN THE  
MOVEMENT

# Periods @Events



PHOTO TOP, f.l.t.r.: Melanie Schichan and Ines Schiller (Founders VYLD), Leah Kratschmann (MenstruAction)

'By offering free sanitary products we promote health equality and help all colleagues thrive.'



**Nancy Yeri**  
Gender and Diversity Specialist, GIZ Ghana

'In our Zambia office, we're building a workplace where no one experiences discomfort or embarrassment due to their period and everyone feels empowered.'



**MENSTRUAL HEALTH DOES NOT STOP AT WORK**  
Find Out How We Promote Health Inclusion in Our Offices



'We are proud that our period-positive efforts in Rwanda have been recognized. This is feminist development cooperation in action.'

**Maik Schwarz**  
Country Director of GIZ Rwanda

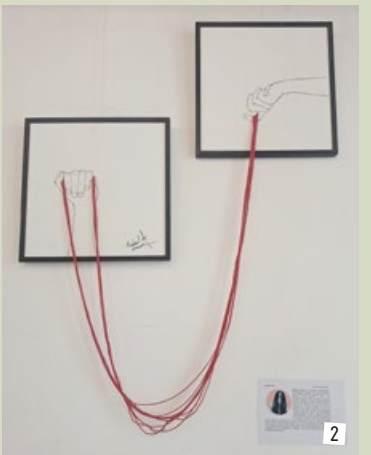
On international MH Day, we highlight real progress towards equality across our offices in Ghana, Rwanda, and Zambia. From installing emergency menstrual product dispensers to fostering open conversations. We are building workplaces where every individual can thrive.

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4c8a18R>



**THE ARTISTS:**

- 1.-2. Kholoud Hosny (Egypt), 'WHEN SOLID TURNS LIQUID' > <https://bit.ly/4rLZXbZ>
- 3. Ola Abdel-Gelil (Egypt), 'Heaviness' > <https://bit.ly/4sN4ziK>
- 4. Menna Montasser (Egypt), 'The Galaxy' > <https://bit.ly/4rfTNjH>
- 5. Aneesah Girie (South Africa), ARTWORK 1-2 'STAIN' > <https://bit.ly/3ZYBOCD>
- 6. Samahah Alaa (Egypt), 'RED CYCLE STORIES' > <https://bit.ly/4qwVbyh>
- 7. Crista Uwase (Rwanda), 'Trials' > <https://bit.ly/4sUUqAJ>



**SPOTLIGHT: GIZ EGYPT  
#LetsTalkPERIOD ROLLING EXHIBITION**

From Kigali to Cairo: Art for change in the fight against gender-based violence and menstrual stigma

At this location, four Egyptian women artists are joining the fight against stigmatization of menstruation by reflecting personal experiences through their vibrant artwork.

This arts-meets-advocacy project is a collaboration between Viva con Agua South Africa, the Spier Arts Trust, the Millerntor Gallery, and GIZ's staff initiative MenstruAction.

- > LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4aj45K2>
- > LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4td9YQz>

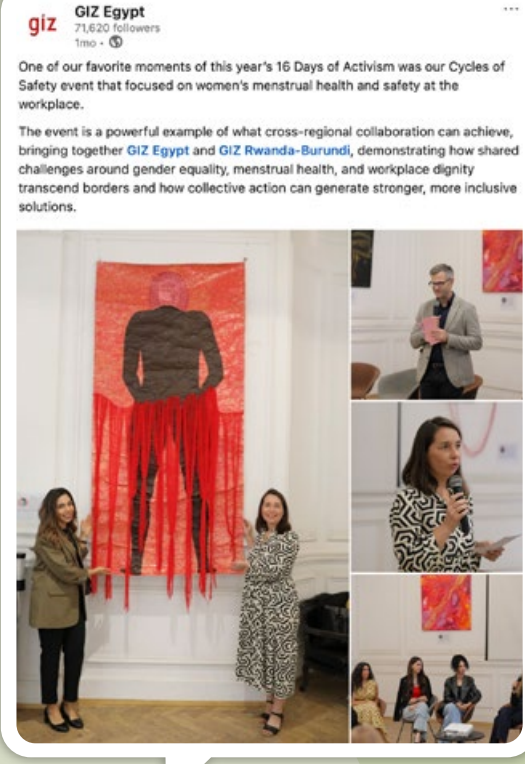




**giz** GIZ Egypt  
71,620 followers  
1mo · 🌐

\*The photos include sensitive content. Viewer discretion is advised.

Art has always been a universal language. GIZ Egypt's #CyclesofSafety campaign featured an art exhibition that centers women's voices, experiences, and perspectives on menstruation and stigma.



**giz** GIZ Egypt  
71,620 followers  
1mo · 🌐

One of our favorite moments of this year's 16 Days of Activism was our Cycles of Safety event that focused on women's menstrual health and safety at the workplace.

The event is a powerful example of what cross-regional collaboration can achieve, bringing together GIZ Egypt and GIZ Rwanda-Burundi, demonstrating how shared challenges around gender equality, menstrual health, and workplace dignity transcend borders and how collective action can generate stronger, more inclusive solutions.

# TESTIMONIES BY ARTISTS OF THE #LetsTalkPERIOD ROLLING EXHIBITION



"The artwork captures the emotional and physical challenges women face during their periods, the struggle of staying productive while dealing with pain and the quiet strength that women carry every month."

**Samaher Alaa (Egypt)**  
ARTWORK 1-3 'RED CYCLE STORIES'

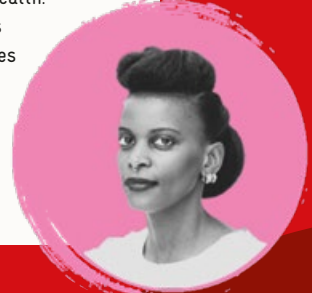


"Each thread carries the weight of stories women were taught to hide: pain, shame, violation, and the quiet bleeding that society never wanted to see."

**Kholoud Hosny (Egypt)**  
ARTWORK 'WHEN SOLID TURNS LIQUID'

"This work focuses on the societal views and the demonization of the female body and the impact these attitudes – stigma, body shaming, and control – have on women's health. The aim is to challenge ourselves to unlearn these negative attitudes harming the bodies of people who menstruate."

**Crista Uwase (Rwanda)**  
COLLAGE 'TRIALS'



"In these works, I reimagine menstrual stains through the traditional framing of a bed, now transformed to place these stains 'on show', visible to all. This shift challenges our expectations and perceptions of something intimate and usually hidden."

**Aneesah Girie (South Africa),**  
ARTWORK 1-2 'STAIN'

# #LetsTalkPERIOD ROLLING EXHIBITION EGYPT 2025



## #LetsTalkPeriodLOUDER / CELEBRATE THE CYCLE BY VIVA CON AGUA

**Berlin:** Launch of the campaign on the red carpet at the opening of the Berlinale.

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4bp6h3D>

**Hamburg:** In full swing at the Millerntor Gallery festival with an event, murals – and a high-level surprise visitor: Annalena Baerbock, President of the UN General Assembly.

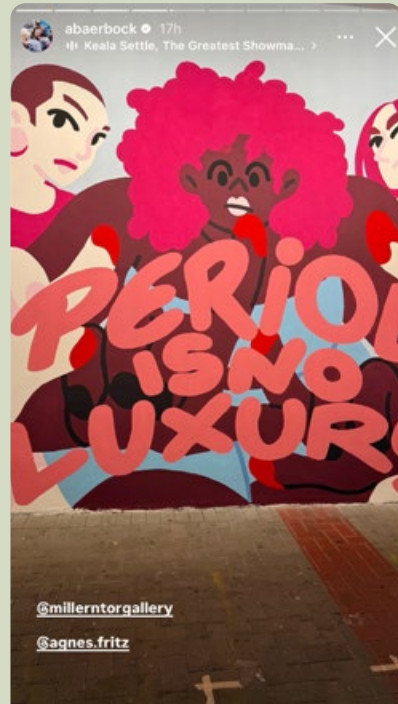
> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4rjT5BF>

**New York:** Bringing the campaign to a global level with a UNGA side event and a photo shoot with Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven, Vice Chair of the GIZ Management Board, on the streets of New York City.

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4tluEWC>



BELOW: Instagram Story from the Millerntor Gallery by Annalena Baerbock, President of the UN General Assembly



## FUTURE FEMALE AFRICA. PERIOD.

The Afro-Futuristic Convention brings Africa and Europe together in a bold cultural exchange. In partnership with Reeperbahn Festival, Europe's largest music festival. It's a movement that amplifies voices, challenges taboos, and shapes futures – and stands for:

- > Empowerment & Visibility
- > Cross-Cultural Exchange
- > Creativity as Catalyst
- > Global Advocacy

Destigmatizing and mainstreaming issues like Menstrual Health & Hygiene – with the #PushTheRedButton campaign and the powerful song The Time Is Now (150k views).

Glad that we as GIZ are supporting FUTURE FEMALE AFRICA to amplify change.

- > YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3ZF4HDy>
- > Article on [www.vogue.de](http://www.vogue.de): <https://bit.ly/45ApVWG>



FROM #kickTheSTIGMA IN NAIROBI TO #PushTheRedButton IN HAMBURG

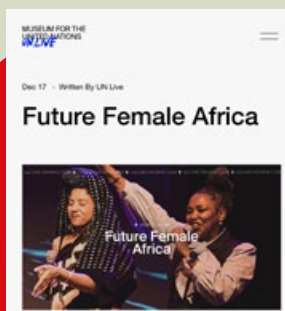


GESELLSCHAFT

### Wie die Afro Futuristic Convention unseren Blick auf Menstruationshygiene erweitert – und warum das so wichtig ist

Rund 500 Millionen Mädchen und Frauen weltweit haben keinen Zugang zu angemessenen Menstruationsprodukten oder sanitären Einrichtungen. Warum das so gefährlich ist, zeigt am Freitag die Afro Futuristic Convention beim Hamburger Reeperbahn Festival auf.

VON DAGMAR LEISCHOW  
18. September 2025

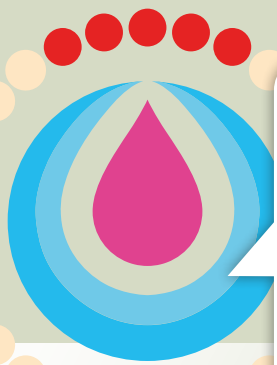


## FUTURE FEMALE AFRICA MADE IT ONTO UN LIVE'S CULTURE FOR IMPACT TOP10 LIST

Congratulations to Onejiru Arfmann (Founder, FUTURE FEMALE AFRICA; Initiator of the Afro-Futuristic Convention and Push The Red Button campaign) on this well-deserved global recognition – together with Doreen Nabwire (Founder, Girls Unlimited), Krysteen Savane (Founder, Anno's One Fine Day), and many more SHEROs.

- > [www.museumfortheunitednations.com/collection/future-female-afrika](http://www.museumfortheunitednations.com/collection/future-female-afrika)





## MH DAY 2025

MenstruAction partnered with Viva con Agua to celebrate MH Day at the GIZ Representation Berlin.

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/3ZEJt8Q>

An updated BMZ flyer – MHH as part of the ministry's feminist development policy – released on MH Day.

> Flyer on [www.bmz.de](http://www.bmz.de): <https://bit.ly/464mF68>



**Dieter Rothenberger** · 2nd  
Cluster Coordinator Global Water and Sanitation Programm...  
7mo · Edited · 🌐

Whether it's "a flow, not a flaw" or "Menstruation is a matter of human rights"...  
Our message is clear: the taboo must go - and we are breaking it together!



**Nadja Kasolowsky** · 2nd  
International Cooperation, Sustainability & Gender Equality ...  
5mo · 🌐

Thank you BMZ State Secretary **#NielsAnnen** for joining us together with **Deepali Sood** Global Coordinator of WomenX Collective, UNFPA, and **Jan Kreutzberg** Chief UNFPA Berlin Representation Office at our GIZ **#MenstruAction** booth!



## BMZ OPEN DAY

Niels Annen, State Secretary of the BMZ, visited the MenstruAction booth at the BMZ Open Day in Berlin. The booth also made a brief appearance in the ZDF aspekte Episode 'Entwicklungshilfe – Wem nützt das wirklich?'.

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4rjP3JN>



Goodwill Ambassadors Janina Breitling and Sara Nuru with a MenstruAction Anniversary Publication at the UNTAPPED conference – by Zarah Bruhn's socialbee

## MH DAY RELATED ACTIVITIES IN OUR PARTNER COUNTRIES

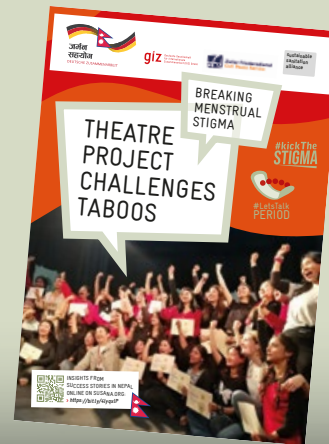
GIZ South Sudan held an awareness event to foster open dialogue on menstruation, featuring discussions with a gynaecologist and a gender advocate to address taboos and equip colleagues as community advocates.

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4aiYcMW>

GIZ Nepal's Civil Peace Service: At the Nepal International Theatre Festival, 27 women took the stage to share their personal stories – raw, emotional, and powerful. What started as a 3-day workshop based on the 'Theatre of the Oppressed' approach turned into a bold performance that broke menstrual taboos and touched many hearts.

> Factsheet on susana.org: <https://bit.ly/4k5673y>

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/3N4mlxX>



## Periods@Work RELATED ACTIVITIES IN OUR PARTNER COUNTRIES

GIZ Mexico joins Periods@Work with a video message from the GIZ Country Director Dr Ute Böttcher.

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4qXoVUv>

GIZ Pakistan's Periods@Work activities are documented in a video to raise awareness of the cause.

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4kNUa2G>

GIZ India promotes its Periods@Work activities by taking part in our MH Day video: Dr Julie Reviere (GIZ Country Director) and Scherry Sigantoria (Gender Focal Person).

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4b5STRh>



© DR ALENA SANDER



"Providing menstrual products outside restroom areas? Absolutely. I used this excellent dispenser last week on the AIZ Campus in Bonn-Röttgen..."

DR ALENA SANDER – MANAGING PARTNER, FEIN RESEARCH AND CONSULTING, AND TRAINER AT THE ACADEMY FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/466JNBd>



# Periods @Work

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

## ON THE ROAD TO A PERIOD POSITIVE WORKPLACE

Managing menstruation can be challenging for many employees, whether it's dealing with unexpected surprises, coping with cramps, mood swings, or feeling low on energy.

These factors can significantly affect our focus, productivity, well-being, and self-confidence while at work. Therefore, openly discussing menstruation, premenstrual symptoms (PMS), severe period pain, and menopause, and addressing the needs of employees, is crucial!

There are many good approaches to become more period-positive. Starting with the essentials, ensuring toilets are stocked with (free) menstrual products, along with toilet paper, bins, and soap, is fundamental. This ensures that a tampon or pad is always on hand in case of an 'emergency'. Additionally, providing information on alternatives and sustainable options like menstrual cups and period underwear promotes environmental responsibility and empowers personal choice. Supporting pain management and offering access to health advice or flexible working arrangements further enhances employees' well-being. The list of good practices can go on...

> [www.periodpositiveworkplace.org](http://www.periodpositiveworkplace.org)

Survey across GIZ offices worldwide, 2023:  
How many times a year are you unexpectedly surprised by your period during work (n = 829)?



829 responses from 16 countries.

Menstruation stigma and #SGBV are barriers that limit entire societies, including here in Rwanda. When women and girls are excluded, everyone is affected. It's time to break the silence, start conversations, and take action for real change towards #GenderEquality.

MAIK SCHWARZ,  
COUNTRY DIRECTOR,  
GIZ RWANDA/BURUNDI



"We're thrilled to see GIZ Rwanda leading the way in Africa and setting an example for other organizations by prioritizing the menstrual health of their employees and becoming a certified Period Positive Workplace. They recognize that providing period products is an important first step – one that opens the door to vital conversations on menstruation, period poverty, and gender equality. This achievement contributes to this growing global initiative to make menstrual health a standard part of workplace well-being and gender equality efforts. Congratulations again to the GIZ Rwanda office!"

DIANA NELSON (GLOBAL ADVOCACY DIRECTOR  
AT DAYS FOR GIRLS INTERNATIONAL &  
PERIOD POSITIVE WORKPLACE INITIATIVE)

© DIANA NELSON

PERIOD POSITIVE WORKPLACE

GIZ Rwanda is the first country office that got certified by the global Period Positive Workplace Initiative.

## Periods@Work. PERIOD.

Our Gender Prize awarded initiative to make GIZ a more inclusive Workplace goes into project implementation. This is the latest activity of a series of measures realised in cooperation with the Equal Opportunities Team, Facility and Corporate Health Management as well as the Competence Center 'Water, Waste Water, Waste Management' and GloBe's Water Cluster.

- > LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4kE1WvM>
- > Webinar recording on [ida.giz.de: https://bit.ly/4b3ynz7](https://bit.ly/4b3ynz7)

JOIN THE  
MOVEMENT



**Irene Genzmer** ✓

Gender Commissioner at GIZ | Financial Feminist and Founder of theskyisherlimit

When I heard for the first time about menstrual health and hygiene in GIZ, I wondered about the relevance for our work in development cooperation.

And it is not long ago that I was very sceptical, when I heard about the idea that period products should be made available in GIZ offices. Just like many women in my age, I thought: Why should this be any of my employer's business?

It is thanks to my GIZ colleagues that I completely changed my view on the topic.

"When I heard for the first time about menstrual health and hygiene in GIZ, I wondered about the relevance for our work in development cooperation.

And it is not long ago that I was very sceptical, when I heard about the idea that period products should be made available in GIZ offices. Just like many women in my age, I thought: Why should this be any of my employer's business?

It is thanks to my GIZ colleagues that I completely changed my view on the topic.

Education and conversations around menstrual health and hygiene are essential to break the stigma, to prevent girls and women from being excluded from society during their period, and last but not least to prevent gender-based violence.

In yesterday's Gender@GIZ session best practice examples with a focus on the African continent were showcased on how to integrate the topic into our project implementation with our partners as well as GIZ internally.

Alan Walsch, Country director of MALAWI, gave us insights into their 'cup initiative', where they provide cups together with trainings on how to use them, to their partners.

In RWANDA an Arts Exhibition in the light of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence started last week with contributions from a Rwandan artist and GIZ Rwanda's project activities.

The Global Programme 'Partnership against Wildlife Crime in Africa & Asia' in TANZANIA is working together with female scouts and girls in the communities by providing menstrual health products like reusable sanitary pads and cups and offering educational programs.

In ZAMBIA, free menstrual emergency products are offered in all GIZ offices to their staff. They are collaborating with local partners to build dispensers in Zambia, as importing them is not practical and comes with high costs.

It is no coincidence that we chose yesterday for this session. It marked the start of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. Across the world, GIZ contributes to this campaign every year.

We were honoured to have Diana Nelson, Global Advocacy Director of Days for Girls & Period Positive Workplace Initiative, as a guest speaker with us who focused on the great "return on investments" that providing period products at the workplace has for a company from a financial, productivity and absenteeism perspective.

The event was organized by the #MenstruAction staff initiative. In cooperation with GIZ's Equal Opportunities Team and dedicated colleagues from Facility and Corporate Health Management they initiated Periods@Work.

The cross-departmental initiative acknowledges menstrual health and hygiene as a legitimate workplace issue, thereby fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for all employees – in a growing number of our country offices, but also here in Germany (a few good practices being highlighted in the poster).

Thanks colleagues!"



A GENDERPRIZE AWARDED INITIATIVE TO MAKE GIZ A MORE INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE GOES INTO PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION.

# Periods@Work

Why the topic of menstruation belongs at work?



ADVOCACY  
ACTIVITIES

PROVISION OF  
EMERGENCY  
MENSTRUAL  
PRODUCTS

PROJECT  
IMPLEMENTATION



FREE EMERGENCY MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS FOR GIZ STAFF

GIZ

GERMANY

<https://gender-works.giz.de/lets-talk-about-periodswork>

GIZ REPRESENTATION BRUSSELS

PAKISTAN

NEPAL

ALBANIA

INDIA

PHILIPPINES

VIETNAM

GHANA

NIGERIA

WORKING GROUP, PLASTIC4PADS INITIATIVE



RWANDA

Ending period poverty

LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4gBut2L>

ZAMBIA

#kickTheSTIGMA at the country office and beyond

LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/3XUHCgc>

MALAWI

Small cup, big impact

foodfortransformation.org: <https://bit.ly/458qQvy>

TANZANIA

Empowering women against wildlife crime

GIZ.de/en: <https://bit.ly/4eyuR0q>

ETHIOPIA

Overcoming stigma, creating jobs

invest-for-jobs.com: <https://bit.ly/4bodSNG>

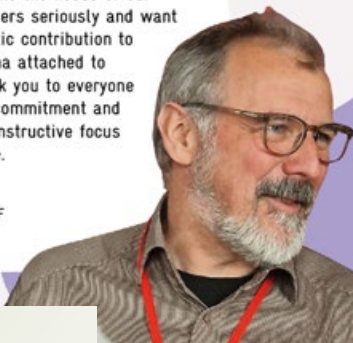
“  
It's not just about providing products. It's also about showing consideration for the needs of menstruating people. That's living, breathing gender equality.

DANIELA SPIES,  
COMPANY-WIDE GIZ EQUAL  
OPPORTUNITY COMMISSIONER



“  
The provision of period products in our office buildings underlines GIZ's engagement. We take the needs of our women staff members seriously and want to make a pragmatic contribution to removing the stigma attached to menstruation. Thank you to everyone involved for their commitment and their consistent constructive focus on what is feasible.

JÖRG SENN,  
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF  
ELVIS DEPARTMENT



“  
At GIZ Ghana, we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive work environment. Our recent initiatives, such as piloting emergency sanitary products and participating in Menstrual Hygiene Day 2024, highlight our commitment to gender equality. By installing sanitary pad dispensers and providing free products to girls with sight impairment, we promote health equality and ensure all colleagues can thrive.

NANCY YERI, GIZ GHANA



## EMERGENCY PERIOD PRODUCTS IN GERMAN GIZ OFFICES

GIZ takes a strong stance on gender equality at the workplace. In August 2024 ELVIS Property Divisions teams installed period product dispensers at German offices. They provide colleagues with period products should they get their period unexpectedly. In December 2023, our Management Board had decided that period products should be made available, as essential hygiene articles.

> Full article: <https://gender-works.giz.de/lets-talk-about-periodswork>



FREE  
EMERGENCY  
MENSTRUAL  
PRODUCTS

FOR GIZ  
STAFF

With the strong support from country management team, the Gender & Diversity Working Group and Corporate Health Management Working Group jointly took an initiative of including sanitary pads and tampons in the first aid kits at both country and project offices for a menstrual friendly workplace. Even being a tiny measure, it has a major impact on the health and well-being of menstruating colleagues and also on equality within the organization.

PHAM THI HONG NET, GIZ VIET NAM



By providing emergency period products free of charge, GIZ is helping create an inclusive working environment and breaking the taboo that surrounds menstruation. – It's bloody normal!

THERESA RETTNER, GENDER POLICY ADVISOR



Through initiatives like these we demonstrate that change is not only possible, but necessary. Easy access to period products should be so obvious we don't need to talk about it – this is only the first step.

ALAHA SAFDARI, MENSTRUATION



## BMZ INSTALLS PERIOD PRODUCT DISPENSERS IN ITS BERLIN AND BONN OFFICES

It's inspiring to see the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) lead by example, recognizing that meaningful change starts with ourselves. By being an early mover in installing dispensers in May 2024, BMZ sets a strong precedent as a role model for others.

- > Flyer on [www.bmz.de](http://www.bmz.de): <https://bit.ly/4hvVUul>
- > LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/3EFPAcv>
- > Instagram: <https://bit.ly/4hiY9ll>

**Breaking the menstrual taboo together**  
Menstrual health and hygiene as part of feminist development policy

**We want to break down the stigma**  
The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is committed to ensuring that menstruation is recognised worldwide for what it is: a normal thing. For around 600 million girls and women that is not the case. This is something we want to change as part of our feminist development policy and we are therefore engaged in efforts to:

- strengthen the rights of girls and women,
- improve gender-equitable, inclusive, and sustainable access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH),
- support awareness-raising campaigns on menstruation, including in schools and other educational institutions,
- increase access to contraceptives and menstrual products,
- and provide period-friendly toilets and washing facilities, for example in schools and health care facilities.

**The "3Rs" of feminist development policy**  
With our feminist development policy, we are working to build just and strong societies worldwide. Women and girls make up half of the world's population. They should also have half the power, especially as they are important actors for sustainable development. That is why we are promoting the "3Rs": rights, resources and representation. This also includes fighting – at all levels – against the discrimination experienced by women and girls during their menstruation, whether social taboos, political restrictions or practical obstacles such as the lack of hygiene products or toilets. We also encourage people of all ages, including boys and men, to think and talk openly about the needs of women and girls during their menstruation.

**Gemeinsam das Menstruations-Tabu brechen**

113 likes  
View all 5 comments  
May 29, 2024

**Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zus...**  
75.035 Follower:innen  
8 Monate • Bearbeitet •

Wir setzen uns dafür ein, dass die **#Menstruation** weltweit als das anerkannt wird, was sie ist: eine normale Sache. Für rund 600 Millionen Mädchen und Frauen weltweit ist das nicht der Fall. Das wollen wir im Rahmen der **#feministischeEntwicklungspolitik** ändern und setzen uns ein für:

Examples from our work carried out by GIZ on behalf of the BMZ

- ALBANIA, NEPAL, PHILIPPINES**  
#LetsTalkPERIOD reaching millions via social media
- UGANDA**  
Better hygiene for all
- MALAWI**  
Small cup, big impact
- ETHIOPIA**  
Overcoming stigma, creating jobs
- NEPAL**  
Movement for dignified menstruation
- PHILIPPINES**  
Period-friendly toilets for learners

BREAKING THE MENSTRUAL TABOO TOGETHER



PHOTO TOP: Periods@Work 2.0 stall promoting sustainable menstrual-cycle health at the GIZ Campus Bonn – as part of the German Sustainability Action Days 2024.



## GIZ SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE 2024: MHH IS A TOPIC

The GIZ Sustainability Challenge 2024 concluded with an inspiring award ceremony. Projects like the Green Office Initiative in Abuja and Periods@Work 2.0 showcased innovative ways to embed sustainability at GIZ, from waste management to promoting menstrual health and hygiene at the workplace.

> [ida.giz.de: https://bit.ly/3Q8PUMX](https://bit.ly/3Q8PUMX)



**Periods@Work 2.0**  
MenstruAction Staff Initiative

**MOST LIKES!**  
SUSTAINABILITY AT THE WORKPLACE

- ❖ **Objective:** Promoting sustainable menstrual-cycle health
- ❖ **Target:** Menstruating people within GIZ
- ❖ **Initiative:** Activation events around the pad/tampon-dispenser, and co-creators/ambassadors programme with start-ups and colleagues



**Green Office Initiative**  
GIZ Nigeria & ECOWAS

**WINNER!**  
SUSTAINABILITY & FRAGILITY

- ❖ **Objective:** Promoting sustainable waste management practices
- ❖ **Target:** GIZ office in Abuja
- ❖ **Initiatives:** Setting up recycling stations for plastics, e-waste, metal, paper, and glass, and buying reusable sanitary pads with the funds raised from recycling



# AIMING FOR ISO/TC 338

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

We have started discussing with other GIZ projects and standards bodies in our partner countries in order to identify opportunities for collaboration. Are you interested to find out more and join the movement? Feel free to contact us at: [info@afpq.de](mailto:info@afpq.de)

## Menstrual products ISO/TC 338



## TOWARDS AN INTERNATIONAL STANDARD FOR MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS

The 'Alliance for Product Quality in Africa' is currently exploring ways to support the ongoing initiative to develop global standards for menstrual products under ISO/TC 338. It aims at creating a comprehensive international standard that ensures the quality and safety of menstrual products while also promoting access to affordable and safe products in all countries – which is in line with the Alliance's mission.

> For more information on the ISO/TC 338: <https://committee.iso.org/home/tc338>

> Alliance for Product Quality in Africa: <https://afpq.de/en>



### Towards ensuring access to safe, quality and affordable menstrual products for women and girls everywhere

Today, a staggering one in three women and girls in low- and middle-income countries, LMICs, rely on non-purpose-made materials to manage their menstruation, impacting their health, education, socio-economic participation, and ultimately their future. While single-use pads or tampons are prohibitively expensive for many, more affordable menstrual product innovations encounter a significant obstacle in being marketed in LMICs: the absence of global product standards essential for manufacturing, retail, and trade.

The ISO technical committee led by The Swedish Institute for Standards, SIS, is currently working to develop global standards for menstrual products including single- and multiple-use products worn externally or internally.

- ISO/PWI 25130 Menstrual products — General and safety requirements
- ISO/PWI 25071 Menstrual products — Vocabulary

The work covers everything from pads and tampons to period-underwear and menstrual cups and will become a global framework. Get more insight on menstrual product standards in our webinar [recording](#) and on the ISO/TC 338 website <https://committee.iso.org/home/tc338>

With a view to ensuring the global process is as inclusive as possible and representative of LMICs where the needs are the greatest, SIS is actively seeking to increase participation from national standardization bodies and stakeholders in LMICs.

**Elijah Kiwanuka – Uganda**  
Technical Product Manager, AFRIpads



“My country benefits from this trip and the menstrual products standardization work: it is helping girls, the nation and manufacturers in terms of trade.”

[Read more >>](#)

**Pramudi Perera – Sri Lanka**  
Assistant Director, Sri Lanka Standard Institution



“By using the ISO standard as a guideline, we can show them the global safety requirements that need to be ensured.”

[Read more >>](#)

Public and private sector stakeholders can participate through their national standardization body

Contact your national standardization body: <https://www.iso.org/about/members>

Grants are available to cover the cost of participation, training and other learning opportunities

Once your national standardization body is a member of ISO/TC 338 Menstrual products, experts from LMICs are eligible for funding to participate in face-to-face meetings to ensure their representation in all aspects of the standardization work and encourage subsequent national adoption.

Also, national standardization bodies can benefit from funding and engage in specific capacity building activities related to ISO/TC 338.

For further information, please contact  
Joakim Falk [joakim.falk@sis.se](mailto:joakim.falk@sis.se)  
Ulrike Ryll [ulrike.ryll@sis.se](mailto:ulrike.ryll@sis.se)



### POTENTIAL AREAS OF COLLABORATION

The Alliance is in contact with the Swedish Standards Institute (SIS) – secretariat of the ISO/TC 338 – which is looking for ways to facilitate the participation of more countries around the world through the respective national standardization institutes.

Potential areas of collaboration with the national standards bodies could be:

- > identify stakeholders and potential national committee members,
- > support national committee meetings to develop technical contributions for the ISO standard
- > train staff and stakeholders,
- > raise awareness, etc.





Cape Town>Zanzibar>Hamburg>Bonn>Kigali

## Exhibition #LetsTalkPERIOD Let's talk. **PERIOD**

An artist incubation hosted by Viva con Agua South Africa and Spier Arts Trust featuring emerging artists from South Africa – as well as a Millerntor Gallery live painting by Syrian artist Nawar Alhusari in collaboration with Welthungerhilfe and various artworks by the Nepali-European NGO NIDISI and the nookees Foundation

**12-28 June 2024**  
Vernissage on 19 June, 1-3pm

At the Foyer, GIZ Campus  
**Bonn, Germany**

The GIZ Staff Initiative MenstruAction is hosting the exhibition with its partners:



Janina Breittling · 2.  
CEO & Gründerin nookees | nookees Foundation | TV & Rel...  
6 Monate · 🌐

*Why this panel talk left me sad and happy at the same time*

Last week I was invited by [Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH](#) to come to **#Bonn** and be part of a panel to talk about how we can be **#disruptive** and loud to spread the menstruation message to the world.

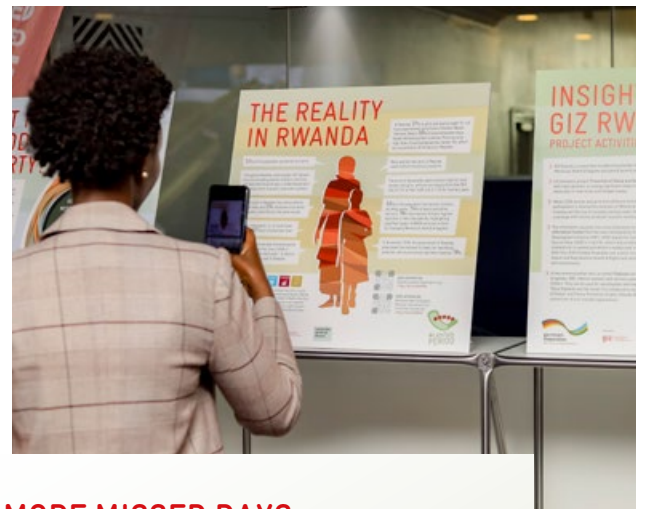


## #LetsTalkPERIOD ROLLING EXHIBITION

The #LetsTalkPERIOD exhibition follows an art-based approach – a highly successful artist incubation campaign, in association with Viva con Agua South Africa, the Spier Arts Trust, GIZ and the Millerntor Gallery. By encouraging open dialogue on menstrual health and hygiene, this campaign challenges cultural and sensitive taboos through various artistic expressions, e.g.: visual art, spoken word, music, dance, and poetry.

Since 2024, the exhibition has been shown in Cape Town – April 2024, Zanzibar – May 2024, Hamburg – June 2024, Bonn – June 2024, and Kigali – November/December 2024, featuring works from South Africa and Rwanda.

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/3ELw73q>



**Maik Schwarz** · 2.  
Country Director @ GIZ | Rwanda, Burundi  
1 Monat · 🌐

Inspiring creativity driving change! The **#LetsTalkPERIOD** art exhibition showcased stunning works by South African and Rwandan artists, raising awareness on **#GBV**, Menstrual Health & Hygiene, and **#PeriodPoverty**. Proud to see such impactful dialogue complementing our collective efforts with SuSanA, Viva Con Agua, and GIZ. Together, we move closer to **#GenderEquality**.  
🌐 **#EndGBV #EndPeriodPoverty GIZ Rwanda**

Übersetzung anzeigen

**giz** **GIZ Rwanda**  
18.348 Follower:innen  
1 Monat · Bearbeitet · 🌐

We were honored to host the incredible **#LetsTalkPERIOD** art exhibition, featuring powerful pieces from South African and Rwandan artists. This exhibition raised awareness and sparked important dialogue on Gender-Based Violence, Menstrual Health & Hygiene, and Period Poverty, complementing our ongoing efforts through various projects.

**Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA)**  
**Viva Con Agua South Africa Africa**  
**Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH**

**#EndGBV #LetsTalkPERIOD #EndPeriodPoverty #GenderEquality**



## NO MORE MISSED DAYS: ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND PERIOD POVERTY IN RWANDA

In the light of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, GIZ Rwanda hosted the art exhibition **#LetsTalkPERIOD** to raise awareness on ending the stigma and taboos around Gender-Based Violence and menstruation.

The exhibition opening in Kigali gathered various stakeholders and local artists on this important topic. The exhibition also showcased different project activities focusing on the prevention of Gender-Based Violence, tackling period poverty and strengthening women economic empowerment.

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4gDVbH8>

**JOIN** Country offices are invited to use the arts-based approach. Contact us: [menstruaction@giz.de](mailto:menstruaction@giz.de)



### WHAT IS PERIOD POVERTY?

Period poverty refers to the inability to afford and access menstrual products, water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, information, education and awareness to manage menstruation. This poses a serious risk to the fundamental rights of women and girls, but also affects their safety and their participation in daily life. Today, an estimated 500 million people worldwide live in period poverty.



**FROM #LetsTalkPERIOD TO #kickTheSTIGMA ... AND #LetsTalkMENOPAUSE**

Viva con Agua South Africa joins hands with the Minister of Menstruation Candice Chirwan for activities around MHH.

> [LinkedIn: https://bit.ly/4gk0njd](https://bit.ly/4gk0njd)

German Ambassador launches #KickTheSTIGMA Campaign in Zambia.

> [LinkedIn: https://bit.ly/4gaddR3](https://bit.ly/4gaddR3)

#LetsTalkMenopause campaign with Nepalese actress & Goodwill Ambassador Keki Adhikari.

> [LinkedIn: https://bit.ly/42whUS6](https://bit.ly/42whUS6)



South Africa - Viva con Agua's #LetsTalkPERIOD song by Bravo Le Roux and Milla Smith  
 > [vivaconagua.org: https://bit.ly/43In7a3](https://bit.ly/43In7a3)



**SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE THAT CLICKTIVISM IS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR TACKLING TABOOS AROUND MENSTRUATION**

The peer-reviewed scientific study 'Breaking the silence: Group discussions and the adoption of menstrual health technologies' by Silvia Castro and Clarissa Mang (LMU Munich) has been published in the prestigious Journal of Development Economics. This article specifically references GIZ's #LetsTalkPERIOD campaigns in Nepal, Albania, and the Philippines, as well as #letstalkperiods in Germany, by the DFB and o.b. Kenvue.

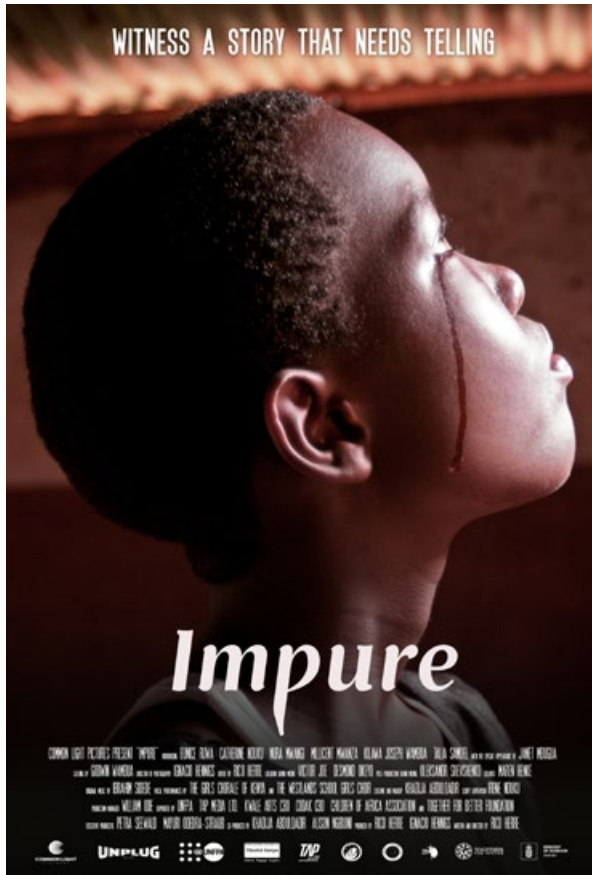
> [LinkedIn: https://bit.ly/4jxZkPq](https://bit.ly/4jxZkPq)

"This study offers important insights for policymakers. We propose an effective, light-touch intervention that capitalizes on women's own knowledge and their exchange of ideas and experiences, thereby eliminating the need for external skills or knowledge. We observed significant interest and eagerness among the women to actively engage in discussions and share their personal experiences.

Our results suggest that the suboptimal equilibrium limiting women's opportunities to discuss menstruation is fragile and can be changed. This indicates a promising potential for large-scale implementation of such interventions, akin to recent initiatives by public practitioners. Efforts like those made by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, using social media and local influencers to reshape discussions around menstruation and destigmatize the topic in countries like Nepal, Albania, and the Philippines, could prove very effective.

These approaches do not necessitate the involvement of every menstruator in a formal discussion group. Simple encouragements to openly discuss this topic and the provision of a safe space for doing so may be sufficient, potentially leading to significant positive impacts on the adoption of health- and productivity-enhancing technologies."

SILVIA CASTRO AND CLARISSA MANG,  
 FACULTY OF ECONOMICS, LMU MUNICH, GERMANY



## GLOBAL SOCIAL IMPACT CAMPAIGN WITH THE FEATURE FILM IMPURE

By using the award-winning German-Kenyan social impact film *Impure* as a catalyst for change, a global social impact campaign aims to tackle taboos and ignorance about menstruation. After the World Premiere in Nairobi in September 2024, the MenstruAction staff initiative together with GIZ's Gender network have already supported special screenings of *Impure* in Addis Ababa, Berlin, Eschborn, Lagos, Lilongwe and the first French-language premiere in Nouakchott – translation and national premiere event supported by GIZ Mauretania.

> health.bmz.de: <https://bit.ly/41nMRFN>  
 > Trailer on YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3CLOx3A>

**JOIN**  
 Organize a special screening or national premiere.

H.E. Stella Mokaya Orina, Kenyan Ambassador to Germany:  
**"THIS IS NOT JUST A FILM – IT IS A CALL TO ACTION!"**



Best International Actress Award for *Impure*'s leading actress Eunice Ruwa at the 6th Nepal Cultural International Film Festival:  
 > LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4aUEs0l>



**TOGETHER FOR A  
#PeriodFriendlyWorld  
10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
GLOBAL MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY**

A whole week of amazing events and meetings in Europe with our #LetsTalkPERIOD Goodwill Ambassadors from Albania, Nepal and Zambia - advocating for a #PeriodFriendlyWorld and to #kickTheSTIGMA.



# #Period Friendly World

## BONN

Festival of Democracy at BMZ

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4giFlvG>

GIZ Campus Bonn

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/3X0hP5B>



Benefiz-Kick SCORING GIRLS\*

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/3WAqOKp>

re:publica

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/40QaW8Y>

GIZ Representation

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4207pt1>

## BERLIN





DG INTPA InfoPoint conference  
 'Innovative solutions to end period poverty'  
 > LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/40tKWyW>  
 > LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/40QIIQX>

**BRUSSELS**

**#kickThe  
STIGMA**



**#LetsTalk  
PERIOD**



**HAMBURG**

Viva con Agua's Millerntor Gallery:  
 How positive activism can inspire  
 development cooperation  
 > LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/3CBdPKH>

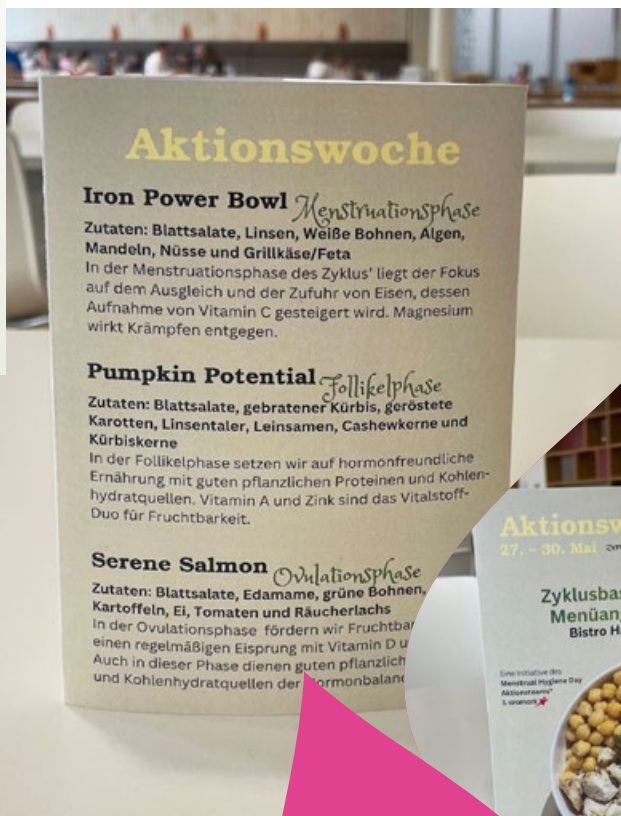




## MH DAY @ GIZ ESCHBORN

A vibrant celebration of the 10th anniversary took place at the GIZ HQ with activities to learn more about the history of the Menstrual Hygiene Day, cycle-based training and nutrition from FEMNETIC, and to discover some of the exciting approaches GIZ is already implementing when it comes to MHH – including a period board game.

> [ida.giz.de](https://ida.giz.de): <https://bit.ly/42MwTY0>



17Ziele-Podcast with Ina Jurga & Katie Gallus – Frauengesundheit & Politik: Gleichstellung durch Menstruationshygiene?

> [17zielepodcast.podigee.io](https://17zielepodcast.podigee.io)

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/41razAP>

ESCHBORN

## UNICEF'S OKY – THE WORLD'S FIRST PERIOD TRACKER APP CO-CREATED BY GIRLS FOR GIRLS

In Nepal GIZ's #LetsTalkPERIOD is collaborating with Oky Nepal (hosted and localized by NFCC Nepal – supported by Simavi) to promote the inclusive digital solution with social media clips and an award-winning short film. It has been screened in Kathmandu and three regions of Nepal as Official Selection of the Nepal-European Union Film Festival 2024.

> YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3CFasth>

Oky wins SDG Digital GameChangers Award 2024 at the Summit of the Future in New York.

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4huvABA>

A joint UNICEF-GIZ team is part of the GIZ Innovation Fund 2024 cohort to enhance Oky's inclusivity as a use case – namely 'Easy Read' by using Generative AI.

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/4sg6Xh3>



SDG Digital  
**GameChangers  
Award**



*A big win for girls and digital inclusion! I'm excited about the SDG Digital GameChangers Award for Oky. GIZ proudly supports this inclusive, localized digital solution co-created with girls to build digital skills and empower young people across Africa.*

**Anna Sophie Herken**  
Managing Director, GIZ



[itu.int/sdgdigital](https://itu.int/sdgdigital)



SAVE THE DATE

**VOTE FOR US!**

... during the livestream:  
14 May 2025, 16-17:30 CEST  
[www.innovation-fund.de](http://www.innovation-fund.de)

**FENIX**  
GIZ-UNICEF-Team

#EasyReadTogetherAI

GIZ INNOVATION FUND ROUND

## GIZ GENDER COMPETITION 2024



What a positive development in the last years: From no mention of MHH at all, to one project in Nepal being under the TOP 15 of the GE1 category in the 2020 competition, to the 1st Gender prize for Fit for School's MHH activities in the GE1 category and an honorable mention of #NepalsMenstrualMovement in the 2022 edition, to the 2nd prize for Periods@Work in the Gender Mainstreaming category and three honorable mentions at the 2024 Gender Award.

- > <https://publikationen.giz.de> – 'Champions for Gender Equality/Good practice examples from GIZ'
- > LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/3CsYu50>



Champions for Gender Equality  
Good practice examples from GIZ

giz  
Global Infrastructure  
Management  
GIZ | GIZ.de

Periods@Work  
INITIATIVE  
2ND PLACE



GM  
2ND PLACE

### PERIODS MATTER: HOW GIZ IS LEADING THE CHANGE FOR MENSTRUAL INCLUSIVITY

The Periods@Work initiative by the MenstruAction staff initiative in cooperation with GIZ's Equal Opportunities Team and dedicated colleagues from Facility and Corporate Health Management represents a transformative approach to workplace equality by addressing menstrual health and hygiene openly and inclusively. By incorporating menstrual health and hygiene into workplace practices, they break the silence and stigma traditionally surrounding menstruation, challenging the entrenched norms that marginalize this fundamental aspect of women's health. The cross-departmental initiative acknowledges menstrual health and hygiene as a legitimate workplace issue, thereby fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for all employees.

The approach is intersectional, understanding that menstruation affects individuals differently based on various socio-economic and cultural factors. The provision of free emergency menstrual products in GIZ offices worldwide ensures that all menstruating employees, regardless of their

background or economic status, have access to essential hygiene items. This intervention not only addresses immediate practical needs but also critiques the often-overlooked aspects of workplace health and safety, advocating for a more holistic understanding of employee well-being.

Moreover, the initiative's inclusive methodology, which involves extensive surveys and active participation from all employees, emphasizes collective responsibility and allyship. By engaging non-menstruating colleagues, particularly men, Periods@Work promotes a broader cultural shift towards gender equality. This inclusive dialogue helps dismantle traditional gender binaries and fosters a work environment where menstrual health is seen as a shared concern, contributing to a more equitable and empathetic workplace culture. In this way, they exemplify how addressing specific health needs can lead to broader systemic change, creating a more inclusive and supportive professional environment for everyone.

#### THE PROJECT

- Launched in 2015, the MenstruAction staff initiative integrates menstrual health and hygiene into GIZ's workplace practices – working closely together with GIZ's Equal Opportunities Team and dedicated colleagues from Facility and Corporate Health Management with the Periods@Work initiative.
- Awareness campaigns, events, and cooperations with internal and external actors were conducted.
- Initiatives to make free emergency menstrual products available in the workplace were implemented.

#### THE CHALLENGE

- Stigma and lack of awareness surrounding menstrual health in the workplace continues to exist worldwide.
- High rates of menstruating employees are being caught off guard by their periods at work.
- Menstruating employees struggle with limited access to menstrual products and facilities in the workplace.

#### THE CHANGE

- Gaining data: A MenstruAction survey showed 62% of respondents experienced unexpected periods at work, prompting the need for emergency products.
- Finding solutions: The Periods@Work initiative initiated the provision of free emergency menstrual products in the GIZ offices in Germany, following examples from the country offices in Albania, India, Nigeria, Rwanda, Vietnam and other countries.
- Manifesting solutions: The MenstruAction staff initiative in cooperation with GIZ's Equal Opportunities Team and dedicated colleagues from Facility and Corporate Health Management fostered a supportive environment through events like "Periods@Work - Why the topic of menstruation belongs at work" and collaborations with other organisations to promote menstrual health at the workplace.

giz



"We take pride in more than 180 contributions competing for the GIZ Gender Award 2024. This truly reflects the commitment to gender equality as a goal and a quality feature of GIZ and the work we do."

**Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven**  
Member of the Management Board



GE1  
HONORABLE MENTION #2

**FROM TABOO TO TALK:**  
LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA TO ADDRESS MENSTRUAL STIGMAS AND PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY



GM  
HONORABLE MENTION #2

**AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH INSIDE GIZ MALAWI:**  
ENHANCING GENDER COMPETENCE AND RESPONSIVENESS



GE2  
HONORABLE MENTION #2

**PLAYING FOR CHANGE:**  
SPORT, MENSTRUAL HEALTH, AND GENDER JUSTICE

GENDER  
EQUALITY  
GENDER  
MAINSTREAMING

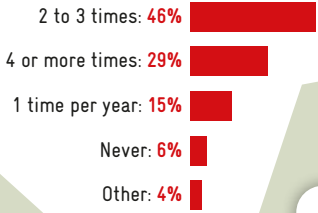
# 2023



Survey across  
GIZ offices worldwide, 2023:  
829 responses from 16 countries.



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



## Periods@Work – MANY INITIATIVES, ONE GOAL

05/2023: MenstruAction surveys over 800 participants at GIZ HQ and in its country offices about a period-friendly workplace; the GIZ Representation Berlin stages a first Periods@Work event.

> YouTube: <https://bit.ly/45C9YNO>

08/2023: Svenja Schulze, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (2021–2025), meets MenstruAction colleagues at the BMZ Open Day Berlin.

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/3P7ur6S>

09/2023: At the occasion of the German Sustainability Days MenstruAction and the GIZ Equal Opportunities Team set up a stall in front of the GIZ canteen in Bonn to inform GIZ colleagues about sustainable MHH products.

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/49WiM2J>

11/2023: MenstruAction and the 'Institut für Zyklusgesundheit' jointly organise a Thought Leaders Circle – Periods@Work event in Berlin.

> LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/3uVto2S>



# Periods@Work RELATED ACTIVITIES AT GIZ COUNTRY OFFICES

In many partner countries, GIZ's Gender Focal Persons have initiated MHH related measures. This world map highlights inspiring examples. Those marked 'Pad' already have menstrual products for emergencies in their office toilets, those marked 'Menstruation Bracelet' have begun to raise awareness and advocate for MHH and Periods@Work.



## GIZ COUNTRY OFFICE MALAWI

Collaborating with the NGO UFULU to combat menstrual stigma and expand women's options.

Integrating menstrual cup training into various project sessions, such as agribusiness, health, nutrition, or education, promotes body awareness and autonomy. The initiative, shared among GIZ projects, aims to reduce absenteeism due to menstruation, improve menstrual health, and empower women through knowledge-sharing in a safe, inclusive space. The workshops garnered interest within GIZ, leading to an internal workshop for interested colleagues.



GIZ COUNTRY OFFICE  
**ALBANIA** 

GIZ REPRESENTATION  
**BRUSSELS** 

GIZ COUNTRY OFFICE  
**PAKISTAN** 

GIZ COUNTRY OFFICE  
**NEPAL** 

GIZ COUNTRY OFFICE  
**NIGERIA**  
WORKING GROUP,  
PLASTIC4PADS INITIATIVE 

GIZ COUNTRY OFFICE  
**INDIA** 

GIZ COUNTRY OFFICE  
**RWANDA** 

GIZ COUNTRY OFFICE  
**ZAMBIA** 

GIZ COUNTRY OFFICE  
**PHILIPPINES** 



## GIZ COUNTRY OFFICE VIETNAM

Creating a menstrual-friendly workplace in Vietnam.



According to the Labour Code, female employees are entitled to a daily 30-minute paid break during their menstrual period. The number of menstrual leave days is negotiated and is at least 3 working days per month. GIZ Vietnam supports this by providing sanitary napkins and tampons in the first aid kits in country and project offices. This gives colleagues easy access to free emergency supplies. This small action can have a big impact on health and well-being. In addition, GIZ Vietnam's flexible working time policy allows menstruating people to take a break at any time.

## #WeAreCommitted GLOBAL MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY

Svenja Schulze, German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (2021–2025) and members of the German civil society show their joint support to break the taboo around menstruation by wearing the Menstruation Bracelet.

> X: <https://bit.ly/3vTXnbu>

 **Svenja Schulze**   
@SvenjaSchulze68

Weltweit werden noch viele Mädchen & Frauen wegen ihrer Menstruation stigmatisiert und ausgegrenzt, mit Folgen für Bildung, Gesundheit & Gleichberechtigung. Um das zu ändern, machen wir uns mit unseren Partnern für das Thema stark. #MHD2023 #WeAreCommitted @venro\_eV @WASHUnited



© BMZ



## MenstruAction. PERIOD.

#ichwillfair: Episode 83 'Vom Feld ins Regal' Podcast: 'Menstruation is no taboo. Period.'

> YouTube: <https://bit.ly/415T9uC>

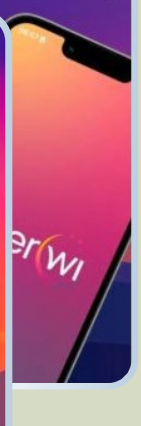
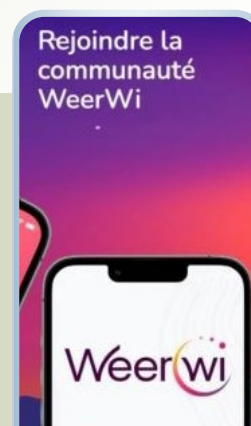
GIZ's GenerationDigital! is promoting digital skills for girls and young women in supporting the roll-out of the UNICEF Oky Period Tracker App in Kenya and Tanzania.

> <https://okyapp.info>

The social enterprise ApiAfrique and GIZ's Sports4Development Africa promote gender transformative change in Senegal through a menstrual cycle tracking app and an infotainment series 'Weerwi' aimed at teenage girls and their families. 3 seasons (à 6 episodes) were released on YouTube, TikTok etc. with an average of 100.000 views per episode.

> YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3Uw6Zn6>  
[www.weerwi.com/en](http://www.weerwi.com/en)

Pour suivre et comprendre son cycle menstruel





## Great potential for jobs in Africa's menstrual hygiene sector

09.08.2023 – A study commissioned by Invest for Jobs shows that there are considerable opportunities to create jobs and attract investors in the menstrual hygiene sector. [Read more](#)



'Invest for Jobs' Booth at Women Deliver – a vibrant meeting place for the global MHH community, e.g. Wendy Anderson, Co-Founder and Partner at 'The Case for Her' (at the center).

## INVEST FOR JOBS @ WOMEN DELIVER 2023

In Africa, millions of women and girls do not have access to menstrual products even though menstrual health and hygiene hold great economic potential. However, companies are often still reluctant to invest in this area – and are therefore missing out on access to a huge target market.

So, how can we strengthen companies in this sector and create good jobs in our partner countries at the same time? Birgit Pickel, Director General Africa Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Sue Coates, Deputy Director The Sanitation and Hygiene Fund, Kaleab Getaneh Zewelde, CEO Mela For Her, Laura Amaya, Associate Partner Dalberg and Megan wa Mukuria, CEO ZanaAfrica, discussed the potential and challenges of the local production of menstrual products at the Women Deliver Conference 2023 in Kigali.

'Invest for Jobs' wants to support local, regional and international investors and companies in their ventures into this untapped market. Producing menstrual products can create good jobs, better working conditions and social protection for employees and promote local economic growth. One model example is the Ethiopian company 'Mela for Her', a manufacturer of reusable menstrual products.

- > invest-for-jobs.com: <https://bit.ly/3vNqDB0>
- > LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/30FFZ0D>

## #LetsTalkPERIOD

Fit for School used the prize it won at the GIZ Gender Competition 2022 to fund the #LetsTalkPERIOD social media campaign.

It teamed up with Pia Wurtzbach (Miss Universe 2015), and with the influencer couple Kathleen Paton (Miss Eco International 2022) and Kirk Bondad (Mister World Philippines 2022) to break the stigma around menstruation. With Kirk on board, Fit for School hopes to involve more boys and men in #LetsTalkPERIOD. This will further strengthen the efforts of the Department of Education – supported by Fit for School – that have reached already 27 million learners in the Philippines with information on Menstrual Health and Hygiene, aiming to keep girls in school – the whole month, every month.

- > [fitforschool.international](https://fitforschool.international): <https://bit.ly/40S3bhA>
- > [susana.org](https://susana.org): <https://bit.ly/3Zpcb1W>

#LetsTalkPERIOD is now moving on to Zambia where it teams up with the women's national football team and to South Africa where it teams up with artists, building on the award-winning #Dance4WASH campaign mounted by Viva con Agua and GIZ's Fit for School Africa initiative.

- > [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/fitforschool-international): <https://bit.ly/3Tgk61b>

Meanwhile, the #LetsTalkPERIOD approach of engaging role models in awareness raising campaigns is also being used to advocate for nutrition (in Ethiopia) and for WASH in Healthcare Facilities in Nepal.

- > [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/fitforschool-international): <https://bit.ly/3T59Z7Y>
- > [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/fitforschool-international): <https://bit.ly/3V1QYpl>



#LetsTalkPERIOD at the Stockholm World Water Week 2023 – watch the recording of the Film screening and Panel discussion on YouTube: <https://bit.ly/4b3oYay>

# STATEMENTS AND TESTIMONIES BY GIZ COLLEAGUES AND KEY INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

"To jointly raise awareness around the Sustainable Development Goals is a responsibility we happily take on as influencers and role models. It's great to advocate together with GIZ for the rights of girls and women by breaking the taboo around menstruation.  
#LetsTalkPERIOD"

**Kathleen Paton & Kirk Bondad**  
– Miss Eco International 2022  
& Mister World Philippines 2022.  
Goodwill Ambassadors of  
#LetsTalkPERIOD Campaign,  
Philippines



"We need to break the stubborn taboo of menstruation. Girls all over the world are asking for information and want to understand what happens to their body during puberty. So we created the Oky app together with girls, to have evidence-based girl-friendly answers to MHH questions at their fingertips and make learning fun."

**Gerda Binder** – UNICEF Senior Advisor,  
Gender & Technology

# FEMINIST DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN PRACTICE



"As a professional athlete with a public health background, I've seen both firsthand and through my academic endeavors how inadequate access to proper menstrual hygiene resources negatively affects us all. However, I am overjoyed to see how my generation and the next are taking the initiative to change the narrative and promote menstrual health hygiene for a happy and healthy future for all."

**Inonge Kaloustian** – Member of the Zambian Women's National Football Team and a public health expert. #kickTheSTIGMA Goodwill Ambassador together with her teammates Barbra Banda and Evarine Katongo.

"Menstrual Health and Hygiene is a topic concerning all of us! I was happy to learn about the many initiatives for MHH in different African countries. As a member of the GIZ management board, I encourage us all to understand the importance of that topic. This empowers girls and women directly! In turn it leads to better education and employment and a better economic development, not only in Africa, but worldwide."

**Anna Sophie Herken** – Member  
of the GIZ Management Board



2022



## GIZ GENDER COMPETITION 2022: TWO MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE SUBMISSIONS TOPPED THE LIST

The Regional Fit For School Programme received the first prize in the GG1 category for reaching 27 million learners with information on MHH in cooperation with the Department of Education Philippines.

The social media campaign #NepalsMenstrualMovement was among the TOP 15 submissions – out of more than 100 entries. In a country of 30 million people, the campaign reached more than two million people with information on MHH through an innovative approach.

> <https://publikationen.giz.de> – 'Gender reloaded: GIZ Gender Award 2022'

PHOTO PAGE 12, TOP, f.l.t.r.: Vice Chair of the GIZ Management Board Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven; GIZ WASH Policy Advisor Jan Schlenk; GIZ Programme Manager Dr. Bella Monse; BMZ Parliamentary State Secretary Dr. Bärbel Kofler.

PHOTO PAGE 13, MIDDLE, f.l.t.r.: Nepalese superstar Dayahang Rai; Nepalese superstar & Goodwill Ambassador for MHH Keki Adhikari; Cultural Attaché at the German Embassy Kathmandu Gregor Czaja; GIZ Technical Advisor Sami Pande.



## REACHING MILLIONS VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

‘Clicktivism’ is proving an effective tool for tackling taboos around menstruation and empowering young women around the globe.

**THE CHALLENGE:** Improving education and increasing awareness on Menstrual Health and Hygiene.

**OUR SOLUTION:** Engaging media personalities as Goodwill Ambassadors and using social media to reach a wider audience.

Since 2021 the #LetsTalkPERIOD approach has reached more than 10 million people in Albania, Nepal and the Philippines.

> [health.bmz.de](https://health.bmz.de): <https://bit.ly/3yA2JYL>



“I really love the humor in all the messaging that asks us to basically just accept it, just as a fact of life. Don't make a big deal, just accept it. Know about it, learn how to manage it and move onto bigger things – using this as an entry point for women empowerment and gender equality. So kudos to you for that!”



ARCHANA PATKAR (SENIOR INDEPENDENT ADVISER TO THE EQUALITY AND RIGHTS FOR ALL PRACTICE AT UNAIDS, GENEVA)

© ARCHANA PATKAR

### NOMINATIONS



### WORLD PREMIERE



## #WeAreCommitted GLOBAL MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY

Svenja Schulze, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (2021–2025), showed her clear support to the global movement by posting a Menstruation Bracelet photo on MH Day.

- > X: <https://bit.ly/3YLqkpP>
- > Instagram: <https://bit.ly/3RC5ZKY>

„Let’s break this taboo once and for all!“  
Video message by Dr. Bärbel Kofler, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development.

- > X: <https://bit.ly/40C6Y20>

**Svenja Schulze** @SvenjaSchulze68

Zum internationalen Tag der Menstruation rufen meine parlamentarische Staatssekretärin im [@BMZ\\_Bund](#) [@BaerbelKofler](#) und ich mit dem Bracelet dazu auf, die Stigmatisierung rund um das Thema zu durchbrechen. Menstruation darf kein Tabu sein! [#MHDay2022](#) [#WeAreCommitted](#)



© BMZ

# #WeAreCommitted

**Bundesentwicklungsministerium** @BMZ\_Bund

„Am heutigen Welttag der Menstruationshygiene setze ich mich dafür ein, dass es mehr Aufklärung gibt – für Frauen und Männer.“ – [@BaerbelKofler](#), parlamentarische Staatssekretärin im Entwicklungsministerium zum [#MHDay2022](#). [#WeAreCommitted](#)



715 Mal angezeigt · wir geschlechtergetrennte Toiletten / 1:53

© BMZ

„Menstruation darf kein Tabuthema sein. Wir müssen reden – und dafür sorgen, dass die Ausgrenzung und Stigmatisierung von Frauen und Mädchen ein Ende haben. Die Tabus und Stigmatisierung der Periode, der vielerorts mangelnde Zugang zu hygienischen Menstruationsprodukten und schlechte sanitäre Einrichtungen erschweren deutlich die Bildungschancen von Mädchen und Frauen, schaden ihrer Gesundheit und untergraben den allgemeinen sozialen Status von Mädchen und Frauen auf der ganzen Welt. Besonders für Frauen in Notsituationen und auf der Flucht stellt das häufig ein großes Problem dar.“

DR. BÄRBEL KOFLER, BMZ PARLAMENTARISCHE STAATSEKRETÄRIN



MH Day Event in Tirana, Albania – and launch of the GIZ MenstruAction Publication.

## FEMINIST DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN PRACTICE: MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Launch event of the new GIZ publication 'MenstruAction – From Enthusiasm to Action: How the GIZ Staff Initiative joined the Global Menstrual Health and Hygiene Movement'.

We were particularly pleased by the speech given by Dr. Angela Langenkamp, the GIZ Gender Commissioner at that time, on Menstrual Hygiene Day 2022.



### What does menstruation and menstrual health/hygiene have to do with gender and with Feminist Development Cooperation?

A lot, because menstruation ultimately affects all people. Humanity would no longer exist without the monthly period which occurs throughout women's reproductive years. The time between the ages of about 14 and 44 are for many people, and not just for women, the most productive time of their lives: it is a time of education, of choosing a profession and career, and of planning one's family – at least if one is actually given a choice and if one can freely decide.

### What does this mean for girls and women of reproductive age?

Over the course of their lives, girls and women go through between 450 and 500 monthly periods<sup>1</sup>. This is the equivalent of roughly seven of the 30 most productive years of their lives. During these times approximately 20% of girls and women struggle with menstruation complaints: sometimes they experience pains that are as bad as an illness, yet are treated and viewed quite differently.

In this context, women often hear: Don't talk about it! // Don't let it show. // You have to deal with it! // It should not affect your performance if you want to excel in life! // Nowadays, there are painkillers, yes, but these are not accessible, affordable and tolerable for every girl and woman.

According to recent studies, approximately 500 million girls and women do not have access to menstrual products, safe sanitation facilities and water. This is not a trivial thing! Many of these girls and women stay away from school or work – not because of the pain, but because of the shame.

Which woman hasn't at least once bled through and squeezed her legs together, hoping that the blood stain would go unnoticed? This happens all over the world. And this is why we – girls and women – then withdraw from the public sphere as soon as we can.

A study cited in 'new narrative' magazine<sup>2</sup> shows that, for a company with 1,000 employees, of which 400 menstruate regularly, a total of 2,752 working hours can be lost annually if female employees are unexpectedly surprised by their period just once a year. The study also shows that it costs companies an average of about \$4.50 per woman per year to address this by providing menstrual hygiene products at the workplace.

According to Dr. Heike Höfler, a GIZ colleague who has been volunteering for years to help girls attend school in western Kenya, it only costs 4 EUR to provide a girl with handmade sanitary napkins that she can use and re-use multiple times throughout the school year.

Where menstrual hygiene products aren't available, girls and women have been – and, in some cases, still are – categorically excluded from public life during their monthly period.

Who makes these rules? Who educates young people about these matters? Who stands in the way of sex education? Who maintains and who breaks the menstruation taboo?

### What does this have to do with Feminist Development Cooperation?

A lot! If we do not actively address this structural disadvantage, we accept it as a given – even though we can do something about it. Where we cannot abolish it completely, we can at least mitigate against it.

The issue concerns all of us: in our company, in our projects and programmes – not just in the field of WASH, sexual and reproductive health and education, but also in the context of employment promotion and work, displacement, migration, transitional and emergency assistance, in the field of public infrastructure...

Basically everywhere where coexisting respectfully and with dignity is concerned and where we work for a future that is worth living. Recognising and breaking the taboos around physical differences is not a step backwards – it makes true gender equality possible.

<sup>1</sup> [www.aok.de/pk/magazin/koerper-psyche/organe/fakten-rund-um-die-periode](http://www.aok.de/pk/magazin/koerper-psyche/organe/fakten-rund-um-die-periode)

<sup>2</sup> [www.neuenarrative.de/magazin/warum-die-menstruation-auf-die-arbeit-gehoert](http://www.neuenarrative.de/magazin/warum-die-menstruation-auf-die-arbeit-gehoert)



## MenstruAction. PERIOD.

Svenja Schulze, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (2021–2025), meets MenstruAction colleagues at the BMZ Open Day 2022 in Bonn.

Some 200 GIZ colleagues contributed photos of their Menstruation Bracelet during the 2022 MH Day campaign, which was undertaken jointly with the G500 Gender Focal Persons.

GIZ Malawi: Small cup, big impact – A menstrual health pilot in rural Malawi empowers women in agribusiness.

> [foodfortransformation.org](https://foodfortransformation.org): <https://bit.ly/3lIxKyC>

GIZ Albania: Mural on gender-based violence – including a Menstruation Bracelet – inaugurated in Cërrik during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

> [shqiptarja.com](https://shqiptarja.com): <https://bit.ly/3lIzKvl>



Më dëgo bijë,

Kockat tua kanë këshjtjella,  
Zemrajotë kurorë,  
Nëse ai të kërcënon me betejë,  
Ti nise një luftë të tërë,

Mbaje mend bijë  
Mbretëreshat nuk struken  
përpara askujt.

Listen to me, girl,  
you have castles inside your bones,  
coronets in your heart,  
if he threatens you with battle,  
you raise him a whole war,  
the last time I checked,  
Queens cower before no man."

Queens II By: Nikita Gill



"It has been a pleasure collaborating with GIZ for creation of Special MH Day Menstruation Bracelet. Often times young women like us are merely seen as beneficiaries. However, in this collaboration, we are proud partners and active contributors for menstrual health advocacy and awareness at both global and local level. Our young team at SOCHAI is excited to work together with GIZ in the coming days as well."

**Bonita Sharma** – Co-Founder & CEO SOCHAI, BBC 100 Women 2019, Gates Foundation Goalkeepers Award 2020 Recipient, UNICEF Asia Pacific Youth Innovation Challenge Laureate 2016, Nepal

"Half the world's population bleeds once a month, so it shouldn't be a big deal. Yet many girls do not go to school during their period, either to avoid stigmatisation or because appropriate sanitation facilities are missing. The Menstrual Hygiene Day helps bring attention to this often ignored issue. Right on!"

**Linda Engel** – Project Manager, Engagement Global, Germany



"Let's normalise talking about menstruation and stop holding back our full potential."

**Rabia Baloch** – Evaluation Specialist, GIZ Pakistan,



"Breaking the remaining taboo around menstrual health is key for establishing an inclusive workplace for all! Feminist Foreign Policy also means that we need to apply within our own organisations what we aim to contribute in our partner countries."

**Dorina Heller** – Advisor, Client Liason and Business Development (AGE), GIZ Germany



"Menstrual Hygiene Day is an annual global event created to highlight and break the stigma around menstruation. It also provides a platform to advocate towards the urgent need for change and improved education to foster inclusion of MHM in policies, fight the stigma and enable women and girls to reach their full potential."

**Doreen Mballo** – Programme Manager Strengthening Institutions for Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation in Zambia (SIWaS), GIZ Zambia



"I am happy that more people have become interested and work on this important topic of MHH. Only about 10 years ago, my first attempts to work on this topic in connection with youth health (in Bangladesh) were rejected by colleagues at GIZ headquarters with the argument that no woman would die because of her menstruation. Well, .... does it have to be a matter of life and death if it is simply a matter of improving the quality of life for women? Yes, something has changed. Fortunately!"

**Dr. Paul Rückert** – Global Health Expert and GIZ Programme Manager (retired), Brazil



"The consequences of the menstrual taboo are sometimes extreme for the women in Nepal. GIZ Nepal supports breaking the taboo in very practical terms through our programme activities. I am particularly glad that engaging national social influencers contribute to raising awareness on the issue and to encourage young girls and women in Nepal."

**Alexandra Plüschke** – Programme Manager SP Global Health, GIZ Germany



"It's time to set-up a period friendly work place to foster equal health and opportunities."

**Daniela Spies** – GIZ Equal Opportunities Commissioner



"I love being part of the MenstruAction staff initiative, breaking the taboo of periods with a wonderful group of colleagues! It's teamwork and we need everyone on board to succeed!"

**Theresa Rettner** – Gender Policy Advisor, GIZ Germany



# 2021



© BMZ



## #ItsTimeForAction GLOBAL MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY

The Menstruation Bracelet campaign has gained traction. In 2021 over 300 colleagues from more than 28 countries took part – including Tanja Gönnner, Chair of the GIZ Management Board at that time.

> [gender-works.giz.de](https://gender-works.giz.de): <https://bit.ly/3vLmCll>

A LinkedIn post with the photo collage from the GIZ staff initiative MenstruAction went 'viral' on LinkedIn with more than 25.000 views.

Dr. Maria Flachsbarth, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (2018–2021), showed her clear support to the global movement by posting a Menstruation Bracelet photo on MH Day.

> [facebook: https://bit.ly/3LJqjGA](https://facebook.com/3LJqjGA)



**Angela Langenkamp** · 1. · 3 Monate · Bearbeitet · 🌐

GIZ Genderbeauftragte bei Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Make Menstrual Health and Hygiene a global priority! GIZ colleagues from more than 28 countries show their support by wearing the Menstruation Bracelet. MH Day 2021 marks a milestone for us with more than 200 colleagues participating! Stand up against period stigma hampering girl's and women's participation in education and public life and thus undermining gender equality.

#ItsTimeForAction #MHDday2021 #MenstruationBracelet #gender #diversity #menstrualhealth #menstrualhygiene #GIZ\_period #MenstruAction #humanrights #genderequality

**Doreen Mbalo** · 1. · 2 Monate · ...

GIZ Policy Advisor/ Co-Founder: GIZ Cultural Diversity Initiative/ C...

GIZ Water and Energy Cluster colleagues in Zambia also showing commitment towards creating a world where no woman or girl is kept from realizing her full potential #endperiodstigma #menstrualhygieneday

Übersetzung anzeigen

**Nora Valenzuela Llorente (she/her)** · 1. · 2 Monate · ...

Portfolio Manager at Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zus...

Check out GIZ Pakistan's contribution in raising awareness on #menstrualhygiene this #mhd2021: Watch this short video by our Country Director Tobias Becker on how GIZ Pakistan is supporting menstrual hygiene management: [https://www.linkedin.com/posts/giz-pakistan\\_video-message-for-menstruation-hygiene-day-activity-6803686814445056000-qnpK](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/giz-pakistan_video-message-for-menstruation-hygiene-day-activity-6803686814445056000-qnpK), You can spot a number of GIZ Pakistan colleagues joining the global bracelet campaign here: [https://www.linkedin.com/posts/giz-pakistan\\_worldmenstrualhygieneday-activity-68040...](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/giz-pakistan_worldmenstrualhygieneday-activity-68040...) mehr

Übersetzung anzeigen



"Over the past 15 years I've seen the movement for menstrual health and hygiene grow from a neglected issue to one that is recognised as critical for the achievement of global health and gender equality. Through our collaboration and commitment we can accelerate progress, working with those whose menstrual related needs are still being denied. It's great to see so many colleagues from GIZ active around the world contributing to this movement through MenstruAction! All the best!"

**Thérèse Mahon** – Regional Programme Manager South Asia, WaterAid, UK

"Correlated with the moon cycle, the menstruation cycle is a natural repeating process and the period part of a woman's reproductive health. Adequate clean toilets make sure that girls could participate also during menstruation at school teaching for the whole month – like boys. This contributes to gender equality. #letsTalkPeriod #AtokanëeEmër"

**Dr. Gabriele Lames** – Water Expert and GIZ Programme Manager (retired), Germany



"Here in Nepal, it really inspires me to see so many actors joining hands to advocate wholeheartedly for Dignified Menstruation and female empowerment."

**Tabea Seiz** – Head of Programs @ Welthungerhilfe Nepal



"It is good that gender gains traction among the priorities of German Development Cooperation. I love to see the very practical examples with which the GIZ staff initiative MenstruAction contributes to concrete change in many partner countries and globally."

**Elke Hüttner** – Director of Division Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure, GIZ Germany

## HIGHLIGHT MH Day 2021: more than 100 GIZ colleagues from Vietnam joined the campaign with a Menstruation Bracelet photo.



"Menstrual health is directly related to our life or life of our mother, our sisters, our daughters. That's why, we, regardless of gender, should take actions to protect our beloved ones."

**Pham Thi Hong Net** – Gender and Equal Opportunities Specialist, GIZ Vietnam

"When I started research on menstruation almost 20 years ago, there was very limited investment and public health attention to the issue. Since then, the demand for scientific evidence that can be translated into practice and policy has significantly increased, and the important work that my GIZ colleagues are doing, ranging from supporting evidence for advocacy in Nepal, to providing technical support for monitoring of MHH education interventions in partnership with the Philippines Government, is inspiring. It will be great to find new areas of collaboration going forward with the German Development Cooperation!"

**Dr. Marni Sommer** – Professor at Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, USA



"Humanitarian crises pose particular challenges for menstruating women. Inequalities that already exist are reinforced. Access to menstrual products and safe sanitary facilities are needed so that menstruators can experience their periods with dignity."

**Ulrich Wehnert** – Cluster Coordinator Governance, GIZ South Africa, Lesotho & Eswatini

## #ItsTimeForAction GLOBAL MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY

GIZ staff initiative MenstruAction took part in the global Menstruation Bracelet campaign with selfies/photos of over 100 colleagues.

The Menstruation Bracelet is a global symbol for menstruation created by MH Day.

> [gender-works.giz.de](https://gender-works.giz.de): <https://bit.ly/3yF2lmz>

'Menstrual Hygiene Management. Relevant, Intersectoral and on the Rise' – GIZ as partner of SuSanA presented the revised and enlarged compilation of key resources on MHM.

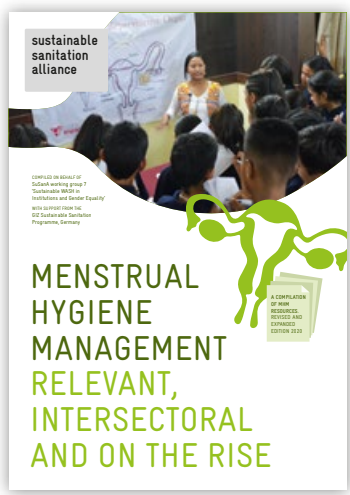
The publication, published by SuSanA and with a foreword by Dr. Maria Flachsbarth, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (2018–2021), has garnered more than 3,000 views so far.

> [susana.org](https://susana.org): <https://bit.ly/2LW3B0q>

Video statement by the BMZ  
Parliamentary State Secretary.

Dr. Maria Flachsbarth, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (2018–2021), showed her clear support to the global movement with a video statement on MH Day.

> X: <https://bit.ly/42QqET0>



## GIZ GENDER COMPETITION 2020

Menstrual Health and Hygiene activities of GIZ's Health Programme Nepal were among the top submissions of more than 120 entries.

Article in the GIZ publication 'Step it up for Gender Equality at GIZ and around the world'.

> <https://publikationen.giz.de> – 'Step it up for Gender Equality at GIZ and around the world'



**Gender reloaded:**  
Vision meets Attitude –  
Attitude meets Action



# #Nepals Menstrual Movement

## INNOVATIVE EDUCATION APPROACH: THE MENSTRUATION BRACELET

The Special MH Day Edition by the young women-led nonprofit 'Social Changemakers and Innovators' (SOCHAI) is following a 'matching' model:

Each of the 200 Menstruation Bracelets purchased by the GIZ staff initiative MenstruAction is matched by another RedCycle bracelet to raise awareness in Durga Higher Secondary School in Kailali District, Western Nepal.

The RedCycle bracelet is developed as an educational tool to better understand the monthly menstruation cycle in an easy, innovative and fun way.

> [www.sochai.org](http://www.sochai.org)



"There is growing momentum in changing narratives, taboo and norms around menstruation. This gives me hope, that one day every girl would know and deeply believe that there is nothing impure or unclean about menstruation."

**Brenda Mbagi Lubang'a** – Gender Advisor, GIZ Pakistan



"Lack of awareness on menstrual hygiene management is indeed a physical health issue to women."

**Giang Tran** – Programme Component Manager Macro Economic Reform, GIZ Vietnam



"The combination of pervasive patriarchal structures, feminised poverty and menstrual taboos are a form of structural violence that manifests in unequal access to power and unequal life chances in many places. It makes me hopeful that the Menstrual Hygiene Day approaches the topic with so much joy and continues to advance the destigmatizes of periods every year!"

**Katja Brama** – Project Manager, Engagement Global, Germany



"Menstrual health is a priority in the WHO European Region. Safe and inclusive education for boys and girls on menstrual hygiene and free access to WASH services and menstrual products are critical components of ensuring menstrual health across our region. We are happy to see GIZ and a growing number of partners and countries committing to tackling taboos and barriers that schoolgirls face every day."

**Oliver Schmoll** – Programme Manager Water and Climate, European Centre for Environment and Health, WHO Regional Office for Europe



"Now more than ever, it's time to take action to break the persisting silence, stigma and taboos surrounding menstruation. Hence, let's step up our efforts for safe menstrual health and hygiene to create a world where no one is left behind! #WeAreCommitted"

**Fanni Zentai** – Component Manager SP Water and Sanitation Policy – Innovation for Resilience, GIZ Germany



"I wish menstruation taboos and stigmas remain one day as myth and not reality. I wish we treat each other as equal humans all day in our life."

**Keki Adhikari** – Actress, Film Producer, Social Activist, Goodwill Ambassador #NepalsMenstrualMovement, Nepal



"All our living, learning and working environments must be designed in a way that every menstruating person can manage their period with dignity. Water, sanitation and hygiene in schools are essential to ensure this."

**Nicole Siegmund** – Country Manager Indonesia, GIZ Germany



"I am deeply passionate about being part of this initiative and working together with other dedicated colleagues on a common mission, which is to advocate and fight for an equal and sustainable future that leaves no one behind because of their menstruation!"

**Daphne Manolacos** – Advisor SuSanA Secretariat and SP Water and Sanitation Policy – Innovation for Resilience, GIZ Germany



"Women are often disadvantaged by the gender-specific distribution of rights, resources, access to education and employment in rural Zambia, although they contribute extremely to agricultural production within the dominating small-scale farming system. Women's empowerment is therefore a crucial success factor to sustainable rural development and so I support MenstruAction to fight period stigma for gender equality here and worldwide."

**Sebastian Köcke** – Advisor Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture and Food Sector, GIZ Zambia



# 2019



## #ItsTimeForAction GLOBAL MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY

Event with over 100 participants at the Humboldt Forum, Berlin.

At the event, the academy award-winning Netflix documentary 'Period. End of Sentence.' was screened and discussed by a diverse panel and the audience.

> [weitblicker.org: https://bit.ly/3sERnzb](https://bit.ly/3sERnzb)

'Nepal's Menstrual Movement' – launch of the report in Kathmandu, Nepal and Berlin, Germany.

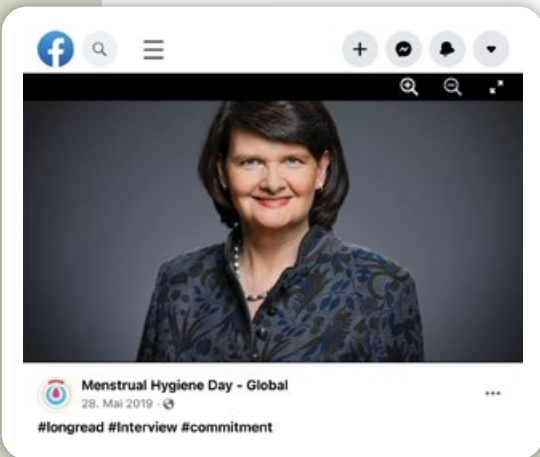
The report 'Nepal's Menstrual Movement' is documenting the fantastic work of activists and a range of stakeholders in Nepal.

> [susana.org: https://bit.ly/374T5SK](https://bit.ly/374T5SK)

BMZ Parliamentary State Secretary's Interview on MHH.

Dr. Maria Flachsbarth, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (2018–2021), showed her clear support to the global movement through an interview which was published on social media on MH Day 2019.

> [facebook: https://bit.ly/3l0qf9x](https://bit.ly/3l0qf9x)



© BMZ



Technology Applicability Framework – TAF assessment of two low-cost sanitary pad machines placed in women's collectives in Nepal.

> [susana.org: https://bit.ly/3vAJ75d](https://bit.ly/3vAJ75d)

# 2018



## MenstruAction: A SUMMIT ON MENSTRUAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT IN KATHMANDU, NEPAL

More than 500 participants attended the summit hosted by GIZ and Nepal's Menstrual Health Partner's Alliance (MHM PA) to ensure that every girl in the country can thrive during her period.

The event was organised by GIZ's Support to the Health Sector Programme Nepal and the MHM PA with support from the GIZ Sector Programme Sustainable Sanitation and participation from the Global Programme Sanitation for Millions.

> health.bmz.de: <https://bit.ly/39g3YSm>



LEFT: Group photo with summit participants.  
MIDDLE LEFT: Key note speech by 'Pad Man' Arunachalam Muruganatham.  
BELOW LEFT, f.l.t.r.: Dr. Sara Parker, Dr. Marni Sommer.  
BELOW RIGHT, f.l.t.r.: Dr. Paul Rückert, Valerie Broch Alvarez, Jan Schlenk.

## Menstruationshygiene in der Deutschen Akteurslandschaft (Humanitäre Hilfe & Entwicklungszusammenarbeit)

Eine Initiative von:

WASH  
NETZWERK

Ergebnisse des Dialogforums  
„Menstrual Hygiene“  
am 19. Juni 2018



## DIALOGUE FORUM 'MENSTRUAL HYGIENE'

GIZ colleagues participated in the dialogue forum organised by WASH United and the German WASH Network.

A range of German stakeholders came together to discuss and share experiences on how to make MHH an issue on a global level.

> susana.org: <https://bit.ly/3F13AqO>

Unter Federführung von:



LEFT: Results of the dialogue forum 'Menstrual Hygiene' on 19 June 2018.  
RIGHT: GIZ internal exchange meetings since 2018.

# 2016

## #NoMoreLimits GLOBAL MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY

Dr. Maria Flachsbarth, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (2018–2021), showed her clear support to the global movement through her press release on MH Day.

To better support the ministry in future activities a first GIZ internal exchange meeting on the topic was organised.



„Wir müssen das Schweigen über das Tabu der weiblichen Menstruation brechen...“

DR. MARIA FLACHSBARTH  
BMZ PARLAMENTARISCHE STAATSSSEKRETÄRIN (2018 BIS 2021)

AUSZUG BMZ-PRESSEMITTEILUNG MH DAY 2018: „Wir müssen das Schweigen über das Tabu der weiblichen Menstruation brechen (...), Warum bleiben in manchen Ländern die Schreibtische qualifizierter Frauen einige Tage im Monat unbesetzt, verzichten Marktfrauen auf den Verkauf ihrer Waren und sind für die Gemeinschaft tagelang unsichtbar? Manchmal liegt es nur daran, dass Mädchen oder Frauen keinen Zugang zu Hygieneartikeln haben, dass getrennte Toiletten oder Waschmöglichkeiten in der Schule oder bei der Arbeit fehlen. Oder weil die Regelblutung von der Gesellschaft stigmatisiert oder mit religiösem Tabu belegt ist. Alle diese Hürden, die Mädchen und Frauen daran hindern, gleichberechtigt am Leben teilzunehmen, wollen wir mit unserer Entwicklungszusammenarbeit überwinden helfen. Sensible und geduldige Aufklärungsarbeit sind nur ein erster Schritt, praktische Unterstützung ebenso entscheidend. (...) Viele mögen es unangenehm finden, über das Thema Menstruationshygiene offen zu sprechen. Ja, das kostet Überwindung – aber nicht darüber zu sprechen, kostet Lebensperspektiven für Mädchen und Frauen. Wir können es uns aber nicht leisten, auf die Hälfte der Weltbevölkerung tagelang zu verzichten und sie tagelang wegen ihrer Tage auszuschließen. Deswegen lohnt es sich, dieses Tabu zu brechen.“

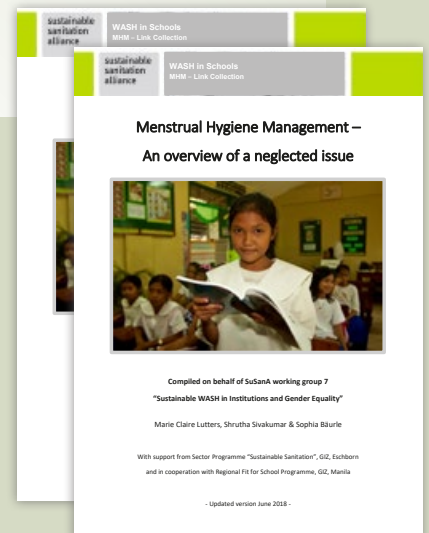


## MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT – AN OVERVIEW OF A NEGLECTED ISSUE

In 2016, GIZ as partner of the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA) published the first SuSanA review on the topic of Menstrual Hygiene Management.

In a cross-divisional effort, a number of GIZ colleagues contributed to the above-mentioned publication – including the Sustainable Sanitation Programme and the Regional Fit For School Programme.

> [susana.org: https://bit.ly/30RwPgi](https://bit.ly/30RwPgi)



TOP: Students in a school in the Philippines. ABOVE: SuSanA Review on MHM, first release 2016, updated edition 2018.

2015



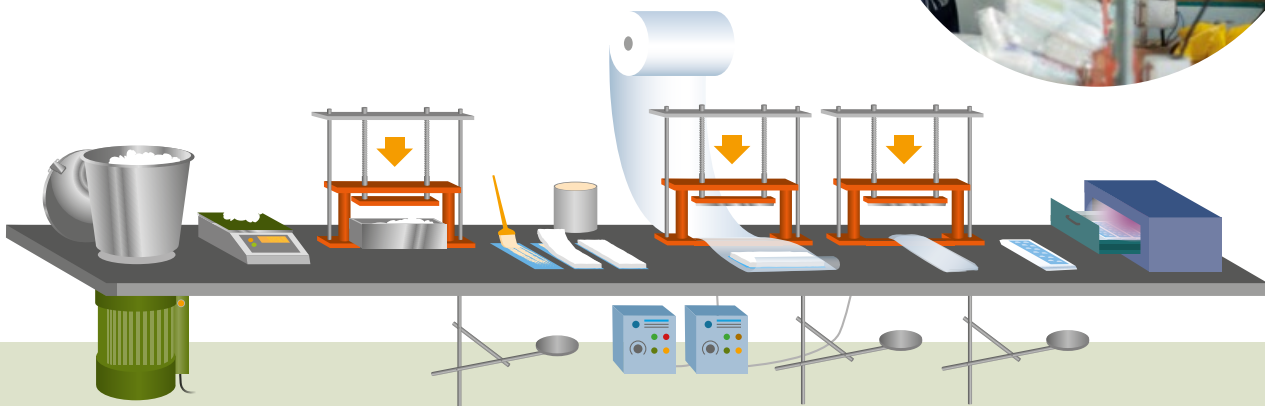
**MAKING LIFE BETTER FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN IN NEPAL – MONTH AFTER MONTH**

As part of the reconstruction after the devastating earthquake GIZ supported two women-led cooperatives with low-cost sanitary pad machines from the Indian Pad Man.

The Sustainable Sanitation Programme and the Support to Health Sector Programme Nepal (S2HSP) strategised on the topic of menstrual health and hygiene in a cross-divisional cooperation.

> [health.bmz.de](http://health.bmz.de): <https://bit.ly/3vtXMz4>

TOP, f.l.t.r.: Shardul Tiwari, 'Pad Man' Arunachalam Muruganantham, Shrutha Sivakumar, Valerie Broch Alvarez. BELOW RIGHT: Women are employed by two cooperatives to produce low-cost menstrual pads. BELOW LEFT: Low-cost sanitary pad machine.



"I have always been a steadfast feminist at heart. So, I was amazed that GIZ has its own staff initiative for this important, yet so often ignored topic. Finally breaking the stigma on menstruation, in Germany and around the world, is long overdue."

**Natalie Schmitz** – Advisor  
SP Water and Sanitation Policy –  
Innovation for Resilience,  
GIZ Germany



"Working on improved menstrual health and hygiene at the personal and political level improves the quality of life and future opportunities for girls and women."

**Dr. Michael Köberlein** – Senior Country Manager India,  
GIZ Germany



"Fit for School focused on handwashing and toothbrushing at scale and shaped national governments WASH in Schools programming. With adding a MHH-focus we could support the DepEd Philippines to reach 27 million learners so far with MHH information materials in a short time span.  
#MonitoringIsTriggeringAction"

**Dr. Bella Monse** – Programme Manager  
develoPPP with UNILEVER South Africa, GIZ Germany



"'They', 'the Cycle', 'my things' ...To start educating girls to know their body, we must drop euphemisms and start giving things the right name: Menstruation!  
#letsTalkPeriod #AtokanëeEmër"

**Irida Haxhi** – Head of Communication  
at EU4Green, Western Balkans



"Due to prevailing waste management practices on the household level, menstrual waste management is automatically part of the municipal solid waste management service chain, however mostly not recognised and addressed in the proper manner. In order to provide better solutions, we also need to elaborate on integrating this aspect into national quality standards for menstrual products and raw materials used to produce them, especially to enable the recovery of biodegradable and compostable fractions of generated wastes as far as possible."

**Dr. Johannes Paul** – Programme Manager 3RproMar, GIZ Philippines



"MHM is not only about sanitary products and female-friendly toilets with plenty of water. It's also about creating an environment where little girls when menstruating for the first time think it's a natural phenomenon and no need to be ashamed."

**Sami Pande** – Technical Advisor Adolescent  
Sexual and Reproductive Health and Right,  
GIZ Nepal



"Go with the flow, come and join forces! Let's fight the menstruation stigma and celebrate Menstrual Hygiene Day!"

**Jenny Misterek** – Advisor Democracy,  
Rule of Law, and Gender, GIZ India



"Why shouldn't we talk about menstruation?  
It's for us the men to learn and to listen more than tell the people what to do."

**Roland Schäfer** – German Ambassador to Nepal  
(2017–2021); German Embassy's Facebook-Post  
on MH Day 2021: <https://bit.ly/3yKjWpt>



"My body is not dirty, shameful, or impure during menstruations. My body is a holy temple fully blooming, reminding me and to the world the extraordinary power a woman has, the greatest power of all: creating life."

**Fatma Haxhiali** – Journalist and TV host.  
Goodwill Ambassador of #LetsTalkPERIOD  
Campaign, Albania



"When I started working on MHH in Nepal in 2014 it was a small activity – now I am happy to be part of a fast growing initiative formed around this taboo topic of global relevance."

**Valerie Broch Alvarez** – Head of Programme  
Strengthening the Health System and  
Prevention of Pandemics in Libya, GIZ Tunisia



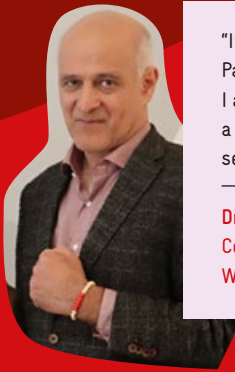
"Join us and stand up against period stigma hampering girls' and women's participation in education and public life and thus undermining gender equality."

**Dr. Angela Langenkamp** –  
President of UN Women Germany



"It was an intern who had visited the Indian Pad Man in 2015 who sparked our interest. I am excited how from then on MHH became a more and more important topic for our sector programme and beyond."

**Dr. Arne Panesar** – Senior Advisor  
Competence Center 'Water, Waste Water,  
Waste Management', GIZ Germany



"With the support of key partners like GIZ, MH Day has managed to grow into a global movement that reaches hundreds of millions of people every year. Thank you so much for your partnership! Now that Germany has a feminist development policy, it's time to step up action and investment in MHH. Together, we can end period poverty and stigma by 2030."

**Ina Jurga & Thorsten Kiefer** – Intl Coordinator  
MH Day & CEO, WASH United, Germany

"Period Poverty is real – and it is a scandal! Let's work together within our projects and programmes to support menstrual health – so that half of the world population can live a regular life: 28 days every month!"

**Dr. Heike Höffler** – Food and Nutrition  
Security Coordinator, GIZ Zambia



**HIGHLIGHT**  
Voluntary work by GIZ colleagues:  
Kenya – Dr. Heike Höffler  
with her NGO Watoto:  
[www.afrikas-starke-kinder.de](http://www.afrikas-starke-kinder.de)

"Menstrual health is a practical example through which different aspects of feminist development cooperation and the specific gender inequalities become visible."

**Joachim Göske** – Director of  
Corporate Communications, GIZ Germany



"Periods don't pause for pandemics and certainly periods don't pause among vulnerable groups of refugees and host communities. It's time to leave no girl and woman behind!"

**Nora Valenzuela Llorente** – Advisor,  
SP Displacement, GIZ Germany



"Menstrual hygiene is not a privilege, but a human right. Without access to menstrual products, menstruators are often forced to miss school or work. As a result poverty and inequality are exacerbated."

**Nabiela Farouq-Martius** – Head of Section,  
Learning Center 1, Academy for International  
Cooperation, GIZ Germany



"Meeting Keki Adhikari and understanding the power of the menstruation bracelet campaign instantly made me an active member of the MenstruAction staff initiative. Let's break the taboo together!"

**Karin Kortmann** – Director Regional Office  
Germany-West, GIZ Germany





"Still today, myths, taboos and limited access to safe and hygienic menstrual products continue to complicate the lives of girls and women worldwide. MenstruAction is a fantastic initiative by GIZ employees to contribute to better care and quality of life through education."

**Eva Miriam Fuchs** – Berlin Office at Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft mbH (DEG)

"Periods are part of our everyday lives. Discussing menstrual health openly and promoting safe menstrual hygiene can help to break down socio-cultural barriers and stigmas surrounding menstruation. Let's talk about it!"

**Martha Gutierrez** – Director of the Corporate Unit Evaluation and GIZ Gender Ambassador



"It's about time to bring women's basic needs stronger into the public eye. Ensuring access to clean water and sanitation are not just human rights – they are also a fundamental aspects of menstrual health. We all need to play our part – in our projects and beyond – to empower women and girls to manage their periods with dignity and safety!"

**Anke Peine-Ellis** – Cluster Coordinator for the Water and Energy Cluster, GIZ Zambia



"Menstrual health is also being affected by the impacts of climate change. The rise in extreme weather events like droughts and floods interrupts access to fresh water sources and sanitation facilities, with serious consequences for public health, but particularly for women and girls. Climate impacts are not gender neutral! Period."

**Dr. Alexander Erlewein** – Head of Project, Green Agenda – Supporting Western Balkans in Adapting to Climate Change, GIZ North Macedonia



"German comedian Caroline Kebekus said in her show: 'You could send a tampon across the room and no one would notice.' It's time to throw the shame that women feel about their menstruation overboard."

**Irene Genzmer** – GIZ Gender Commissioner, GIZ Germany



"Helping to make menstruation a fact of life rather than a taboo is important to me. It's a step towards empowering individuals to embrace their bodies without shame or stigma. Together, let's create a supportive environment where everyone can manage their periods with ease and confidence."

**Aissa Giering** – Communications Specialist, Property Division ELVIS, GIZ Germany

"The workplace of the future recognizes our humanity and understands that silencing menstruation doesn't make us more professional, and it's encouraging to see this awareness growing."

**Yasmina Thamri** – Communications Specialist, Bilateral Energy Partnerships, GIZ Eschborn



"Walk the Talk of Feminist Development Policy! When our advocacy for feminist development policy abroad isn't mirrored in our organizational structures regarding menstrual health and hygiene, our credibility falters. Let's align our actions with our principles, ensuring we 'walk the talk' both internally and externally."

**Alaha Safdari** – Project Manager, GP Decent Work for a Just Transition, GIZ Germany



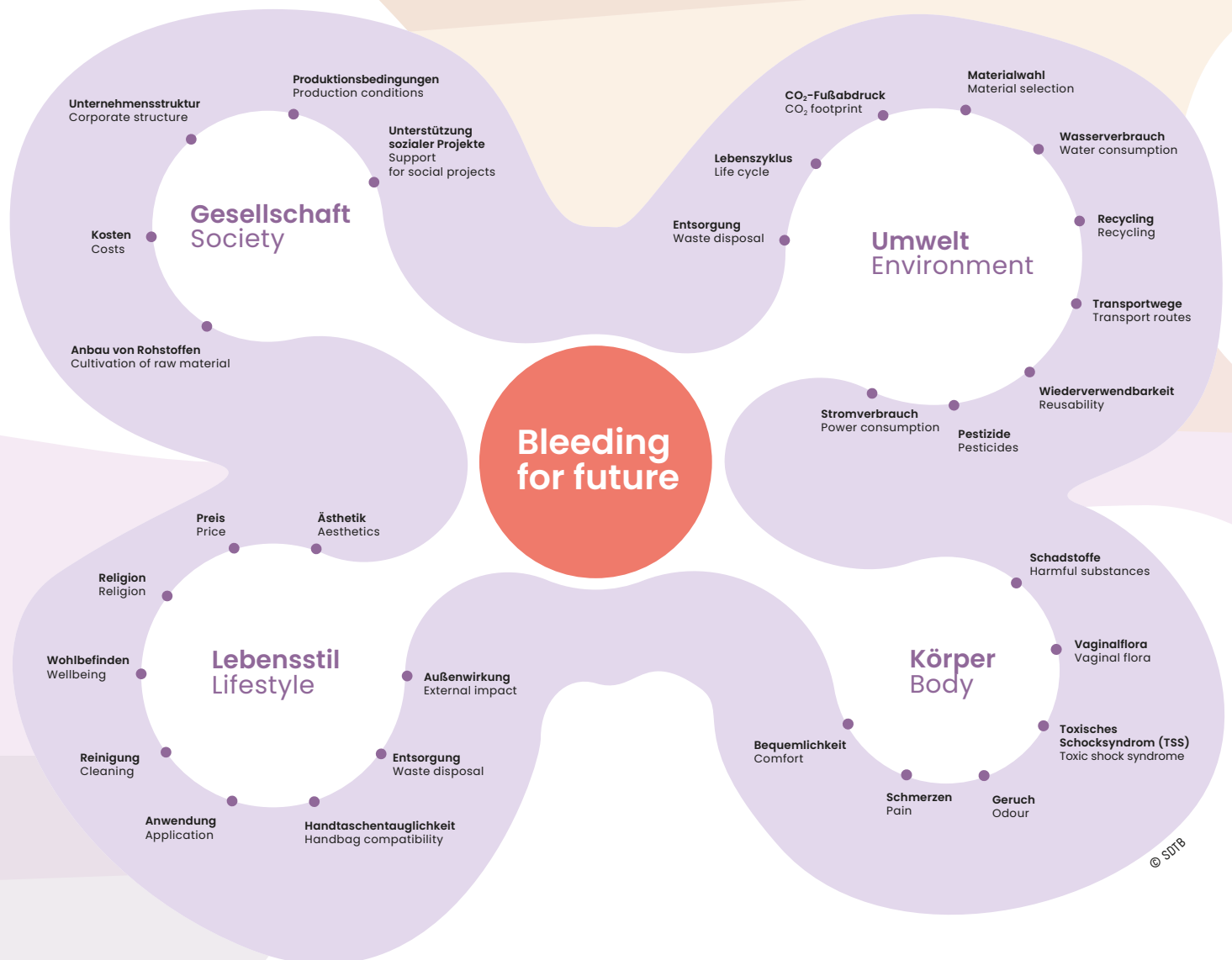


Deutsches  
Technik  
Museum

# BLEEDING FOR FUTURE

"Sustainable bleeding is complex and personal. Many factors shape your choice – what is important to you?"

VISIT THIS SPECIAL EXHIBITION IN 2026!



© SMFB



# MenstruAction YOUR OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE

**sustainable sanitation alliance**

**MENSTRUAL HEALTH & HYGIENE RELEVANT, INTERSECTORAL AND ON THE RISE**

**FOREWORD**

Svenja Schulze, German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development and members of the German civil society have been proud to support the book that takes around menstruation by wearing the Menstruation Bandaid.

From left: Judith Ringelshöfer, Theresia Kufner, Karolin Uhlmann, Svenja Schulze, Alana Knappeisen, Mathias Wiegge, Tina Pennerstorfer.

**DEAR READERS**

Many young people grow up in ignorance about their bodies and their rights, which deprives them of the opportunity to make their own choices about their future. During my visits to other countries, I have seen the dramatic consequences of this. I met girls who told me what it is like not to know what is happening with your own body, what it is like to regard life as a kind of black box of which you are afraid. What it is like not to be able to talk about menstruation, not even with your friends or your mother, because it's a taboo subject. Many have told me that they cannot go to school while they have their period, because there are no toilets with running water where they could change tampons or pads. Or simply because they have no access to menstrual products—in many cases because they cannot afford them. Or, sometimes, because it "isn't proper" to go to school during menstruation. That leaves girls with gaps in their education—and their education determines their future.

Unfortunately, these are not individual instances—this is a structural problem. Over 600 million girls and women worldwide have no access to information on menstruation, no gender appropriate toilets or to menstrual products. During their period, many of them are isolated and prevented from taking part in normal life. That is unfair.

It harms their health and well-being—and that of society as a whole! No society that wants to be successful should refuse to benefit from the participation of half of its people—not even for a few days each month. There is clear evidence from studies which shows that prosperity and economic increase if women enjoy equality and are able to use their potential to the full. Societies can only be peaceful and stable if all people enjoy equal participation in political, economic, and social life.

That is why, in my capacity as Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, I pursue a feminist development policy. Its purpose is to reduce the discrimination and oppression that keep women from enjoying equal participation. This includes providing access to menstrual health and hygiene, and eliminating the taboos surrounding menstruation once and for all.

The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development supports, for example, the Fit for School program in Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia and the Philippines. Working with these countries' ministries of education, as many as 27 million students, teachers and staff members have already received information on menstrual health and hygiene. We also support social media campaigns, working through influencers in the Global South—including of course boys and men. These influences do far more communication for what it is—something completely natural.

In the present publication, the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SSA) provides a collection of knowledge around menstrual health and hygiene, in order to offer practical ideas to be used on the ground. The program presented on the world map at the beginning of the publication gives you just a few examples of successful approaches. You are invited to let these ideas inspire you—this is about much more than just a few days at a certain time of the month!

Svenja Schulze  
German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development

**DOWNLOAD THE PUBLICATION ON SUSANA.ORG:**  
> <https://susana.org/S3nByU>

**STAY INFORMED  
PAPERS, GUIDELINES  
AND PUBLICATIONS**

**JUST THE FACT!**

**THE BASICS**

- Menstruation is natural.
- 2-7 days
- 1.6 billion women lack access to MHM

**WHY IT**

**A TOOLKIT FOR INTEGRATING MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT (MHM) INTO HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**

**THE FULL GUIDE**

## A Toolkit for Integrating MHM into Humanitarian Response

Sommer, M., Schmitt, M. & Clatworthy, D., 2017

> The Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in Emergencies toolkit aims to provide streamlined guidance to support organizations and agencies seeking to rapidly integrate MHM into existing programming across sectors and phases.

> <https://susana.org/9tma40>

# PARTICIPATE ADVOCACY AND CONFERENCES



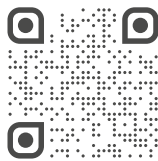
## Global Menstrual Hygiene Day 28th May / Making menstruation a normal fact of life by 2030

WASH United

> The international Menstrual Hygiene Day (MH Day), initiated and led by the NGO WASH United, is the world's largest and most relevant campaign focused on menstruation. The campaign aims to ensure that by 2030, no woman or girl is prevented from achieving her full potential due to her period. Organizations around the world are joining the campaign by breaking the silence and overcoming the stigma surrounding menstruation. This raises awareness about MHH and promotes greater access to menstrual products, sanitation facilities and education.

While the major focus is on 28 May, the organization carries out advocacy activities throughout the year. The impact of MH Day 2022 was remarkable, with 225,000 contributions on social media and 14,670 articles in online news media. In total, the campaign reached 687 million people worldwide. The success of MH Day shows that there is growing recognition of the importance of MHH in achieving gender equality and sustainable development.

> <https://menstrualhygieneday.org>



# LEARN E-LEARNING, WEBINARS, APPS...

## Menstruation in a Global Context: Addressing Policy and Practice

MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK



## Menstruation in a Global Context: Addressing Policy and Practice

ColumbiaX @ edX

> Columbia University has released an open online course, Menstruation in a Global Context: Addressing Policy and Practice, to provide learners with a foundation on the global menstruation movement that aims to ensure that the menstrual needs of everyone, everywhere are met.

This course reviews the menstrual health and hygiene research, programming, and policies being implemented around the world. Participants will gain knowledge and skills on approaches for MHH program design and implementation, research, monitoring and advocacy, with an emphasis on the needs of low-income and vulnerable populations around the world.

The course is free and open to all on edX.org with an optional paid verified certificate program.

> edx.org: <https://bit.ly/3BCV6B7>

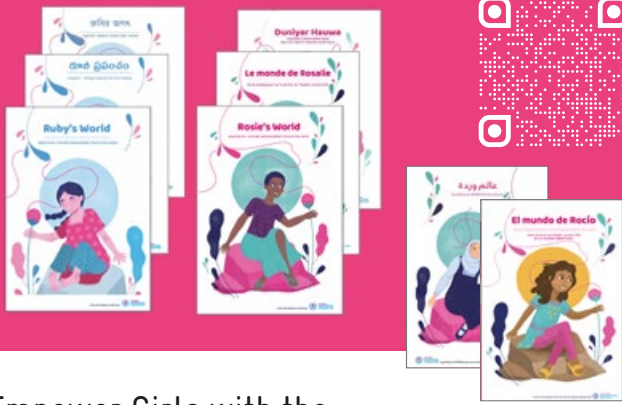


## Oky App

UNICEF

> Stress free periods with Oky! Oky is the world's first period tracker app for girls and created with girls. It provides information about menstruation in fun, creative and positive ways straight into girls' hands through the tools they use every day – mobile phones. Oky lets girls feel in control and more confident by tracking their periods, and getting the information that all girls should know.

> <https://okyapp.info>



## Empower Girls with the free MHM Education Guide

WASH United, 2018

> For girls to manage their periods safely, hygienically and without shame, they need a basic understanding of what menstruation is and how to handle it. Unfortunately, millions of girls lack access to even minimal information on menstruation.

WASH United's MHM Education Guide, developed together with girls and teachers, is a compact, easy-to-use, and low-cost solution. It is available for free in more than 20 languages: English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Nepali, Amharic, Kiswahili, Hindi and many more Indian languages.

> [www.wash-united.org/mhm-guide/mhm-guide](http://www.wash-united.org/mhm-guide/mhm-guide)



## WATCH & LISTEN FILMS AND PODCASTS



## 28ish Days Later – Podcast

Podcast, BBC, 2022

> This intimate, bold and taboo-busting podcast series explores the menstrual cycle – the science, drama, history, personal stories and politics in-between. India Rakusen explores the whole story, discovering facts that could change your life. Periods are just the beginning. In this BBC podcast series, the menstrual cycle is explored from the beginning of bleeding to the start of the next cycle. Listeners will discover how gaining knowledge about hormones and the menstrual cycle can change their lives, one day at a time.

> [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0019r79](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0019r79)

## COMMIT TO MHH ACTION AND INVESTMENT

## PERIOD POSITIVE WORKPLACE



## Period Positive Workplaces

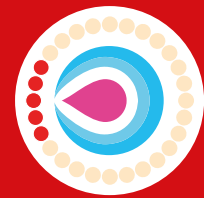
> Period positive workplaces can increase employee productivity and reduce absenteeism for people who menstruate. Organizations become stronger and more inclusive by providing for menstrual needs. Join organizations around the world to become a Period Positive Workplace and receive complimentary certification by applying here.

> [www.periodpositiveworkplace.org](http://www.periodpositiveworkplace.org)

## AND MORE...



FIND MORE INFORMATION.  
JOIN US ON THE SuSanA Forum:  
> <https://bit.ly/3yKNcpb>



## IMPRINT

As a federally owned enterprise, GIZ supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development.

**Published by:**  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

**Registered offices:**  
Bonn und Eschborn

Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 32 + 36  
53113 Bonn  
T +49 228 44 60-0  
F +49 228 44 60-17 66

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5  
65760 Eschborn  
T +49 6196 79-0  
F +49 6196 79-1115

E info@giz.de  
I www.giz.de

**Responsible:**  
Fanni Zentai, on behalf of the  
GIZ Staff Initiative MenstruAction

**Editors:**  
Daphne Manolakos, Jan-Christoph Schlenk,  
Natalie Schmitz, Dr. Arne Panesar

**Reviewers:**  
Theresa Rettner, Alaha Safdari,  
Dr. Katrin Dauenhauer, Anna von Roenne,  
Karen Birdsall

**Contact:**  
MenstruAction@giz.de

**Design and product development:**  
Christine Lüdke, büro lüdke, Berlin  
www.bueroluedke.de

Production and print supported by  
GIZ Sustainability Fund

**Photo credits/sources:**  
GIZ has image rights unless otherwise stated or  
an image is directly attached to the showcase  
post for an organization, initiative or resource.

**URL links:**  
This publication contains links to external  
websites. Responsibility for the content of the  
listed external sites always lies with their  
respective publishers. When the links to  
these sites were first posted, GIZ checked the  
third-party content to establish whether it  
could give rise to civil or criminal liability.  
However, the constant review of the links to  
external sites cannot reasonably be expected  
without concrete indication of a violation of  
rights. If GIZ itself becomes aware or is notified  
by a third party that an external site it has  
provided a link to gives rise to civil or criminal  
liability, it will remove the link to this site  
immediately. GIZ expressly dissociates itself  
from such content.

GIZ is responsible for the content of  
this publication.

Printed on 100% recycled paper,  
certified to FSC standards

**Place and date of publication:**  
Bonn and Eschborn,  
March 2026

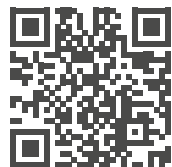


**Special edition  
from Nepal**  
by the youth-led NGO  
Social Changemakers and  
Innovators. To learn more:  
<https://sochai.org>

**The Menstruation Bracelet**  
has become a symbol of the fight against  
period stigma, just as the red ribbon stands  
for the fight against HIV/AIDS. A bracelet with  
28 beads, five red and 23 white, symbolizing  
the average menstruation cycle.



CUT  
WEAR  
JOIN



Join us! Let us break the taboo around menstruation together.



CUT  
WEAR  
JOIN

Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices  
Bonn und Eschborn

Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 32+36  
53113 Bonn, Germany  
T +49 228 44 60-0  
F +49 228 44 60-17 66

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5  
65760 Eschborn, Germany  
T +49 61 96 79-0  
F +49 61 96 79-11 15

E info@giz.de  
I www.giz.de

