

TWHAHF Insight
Vol. 2



MHM IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS

Executive Summary

Nigeria faces a critical Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) crisis that directly impacts female education, health, and dignity. Many schoolgirls and women across the country suffer from period poverty, driven by a lack of education and financial resources, alongside persistent period shame. When schools lack the infrastructure and resources to support basic MHM, girls face severe academic and personal consequences. ¹

To address these challenges, targeted intervention programs like the "Pad a School Girl" campaign must combine material support with sustainable infrastructure and dignity-focused education.



POLICY PROBLEM AND CONTEXT

Period Poverty and Stigma



Proper Menstrual hygiene practices is hampered by a lack of resources, accurate information, and social acceptance:

Period Stigma:

Approximately 70% of schoolgirls and women in Nigeria experience period shame. ³

Impact on

Schooling: The combined effects of period poverty and poor MHM have contributed to roughly 10 million girls dropping out of school. ³

Knowledge and Financial Barriers:

Period poverty affects schoolgirls through a lack of accurate MHM knowledge (82.6%) and financial inability to purchase products (51%). ²

Severe Economic Consequences:

Severe economic pressure forces some young girls to resort to high-risk behaviors simply to afford basic sanitary pads. ⁵





POLICY PROBLEM AND CONTEXT

Infrastructure Gaps in Schools



According to UNICEF and WHO, proper MHM requires three primary resources: access to clean absorbent materials, private changing spaces with soap and water, and convenient disposal systems.⁴ Nigerian schools consistently fail to meet these basic standards.

Inadequate Facilities: About 84.2% of schoolgirls cite a complete lack of functional toilets and changing rooms in their schools.²

Infrequent Pad Changes: High product costs lead to low changing frequencies, increasing health risks for students during their periods.²

Lack of Privacy: 25% of girls do not have a private space at school to change and manage their hygiene safely.³





STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Establish Sustainable Period Banks

A one-off distribution of sanitary pads provides only immediate, short-term relief. School administrators and civil society partners should set up managed "Period Banks" within schools to ensure a continuous supply of emergency sanitary products. Strong management frameworks must be implemented alongside these banks to prevent product diversion and mismanagement.

Integrate "Period Pride" into MHM Outreach

Distributing pads solves only part of the problem. Educational outreaches must simultaneously address period shame by promoting "period pride," body positivity, and accurate MHM education. Empowering girls with confidence and knowledge creates a lasting impact that extends far beyond a single pad distribution.

Upgrade School Sanitation Infrastructure

Government educational boards and school leaders must prioritize building and maintaining safe MHM infrastructure. Every school facility should be equipped with clean, private changing rooms, reliable water access, soap, and hygienic waste disposal systems to ensure girls can manage their periods safely and stay in school.



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