

# GENDER

## Measuring Progress on Menstruation for Girls in 2019

### PURPOSE

In March 2019, multi-sectoral researchers, practitioners, and monitoring and evaluation specialists convened to identify priority indicators across key areas within global health and development, and assess alignment of the identified priority indicators with interventions addressing menstruation. The focus was on the menstruation-related issues impacting girls in and out of school, given the strong potential links between Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) policy and outcomes.

The result of this meeting was a green paper entitled “**Monitoring Menstrual Health and Hygiene**”, and a series of sector-themed one-page highlight documents, including this one focused on Gender.

### BACKGROUND

The ‘menstrual movement’ is rapidly evolving, and there is a need for collaboration and consensus to assess progress for holistic MHH policy that can improve girls’ learning and life outcome, and to identify opportunities for linking with other measurement efforts at national and global levels. This includes aligning menstruation with the priority areas of education, gender, water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH), psychosocial health, and SRH. Validated, rigorous measures are needed across levels of investment in relation to menstruation.

### HOW MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE RELATES TO GENDER

The challenges girls face in school are grounded in systems that are gender unequal and perpetuate girl's disempowerment. Thus, the various aspects presented in the above priority areas, such as a lack of access to resources for MHH, compromised health and wellbeing, harmful gender and social norms, stigma and lack of agency, and biased laws, policies and environments, contribute to disempowerment, gender inequality and discrimination. This in turn compromises the dignity and rights of girls, and all people who menstruate. Changing institutional structures and systems, and engaging girls and women, men and boys, and other gender minorities through education, interventions and policy is essential, recognizing that menstruators (girls and all individuals who menstruate) exist within a societal framework, and without doing so, we risk inadvertently creating or exacerbating a gender gap. Policies must explicitly commit to promoting gender equality, including providing a safe environment to/from and within schools, promoting girls in sports, and working with families and communities to provide gender enabling environments beyond schools.

## ALIGNMENT OF GENDER IMPACT MEASURES WITH MHH

An analysis was conducted to examine if and how MHH monitoring and evaluation efforts contribute or could contribute to the priorities within each of the five areas, and to map out where connections or overlaps exist. **The top priorities identified were gender norms; child labor; empowerment; and child marriage.**

Missing measures, or those in need of further development, were also identified. These included gender specific pathways in relation to menstruation that pertain to gender equity, along with cost and financing, such as from the perspective of household expenditures (but also relevant for schools).

## LINKS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



In addition, menstruation and MHH were identified as relevant to achieving the following Gender-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDG): **SDG5 (gender equality) and SDG10 (reduced inequalities).**

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