

WORLD MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY REPORT, MAY 28TH 2019



INERELA+ NIGERIA
POSITIVEFAITH IN ACTION

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Contents

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT..... 4

3.0 METHODOLOGY 4

4.0 ACTIVITIES..... 4

5.0 ACHIEVEMENTS 6

6.0 LESSON LEARNT..... 6

7.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 7

8.0 APPENDIX 1: PHOTOGRAPHS. 8

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Menstrual Hygiene Day is an annual awareness day on May 28 to highlight the importance of good menstrual hygiene management. It was initiated by the German-based Non-Governmental Organization, WASH United in 2014 and aims to benefit women and girls worldwide. The 28th was selected to acknowledge that 28 days is the average length of the menstrual cycle.

Menstrual hygiene is fundamental to the dignity and wellbeing of women and girls and an important part of basic hygiene, sanitation and reproductive health services for which every woman and girl has a right. However, menstruation is too often seen as a taboo, with many negative cultural attitudes associated with it, including the idea that menstruating women and girls are ‘contaminated’, ‘dirty’ and ‘impure’.

With respect to the Global Goals regarding the celebration of menstrual hygiene day, NINERELA+ Nigeria has been strategically supporting adolescent girls through the faith leaders’ based platform. Through this platform, reports have shown that poor menstrual health management in school worries and humiliates adolescent girls and has contributed to monthly absenteeism leading to poor performance in schools. NINERELA+ joined other advocates worldwide to ensure that the Menstrual Hygiene Day will help to break the silence and build awareness about the fundamental role that good menstrual hygiene plays in enabling women and girls to reach their full potential.

NINERELA+ through an in-school activity, reached 147 in-school adolescent girls of Government Secondary Jibi, FCT- Abuja with a behavioural change communication program to share the right and positive Knowledge around menstruation and menstrual hygiene management. In order to sustain this initiative, an adolescent girls’ club, the Sisters in Health and Empowerment club (SHE’s Club) was introduced where the selected students serve as advocates of Reproductive Health and Sexual Health Rights (SHSH) of young girl in the school. In the course of this activity, there were some key findings. Female students don’t have adequate facilities to wash themselves during their menstruation cycle, and they use old clothes during their menstruation period instead of pads. In addition, they do not have adequate space to change or wash their clothes during menstruation periods. These key issues have led to absenteeism of most students during their menstrual period.

There was also a replication of this key activity in other INERELA+ Nigeria supported states like Kaduna, Benue, Ondo and Enugu states respectively.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT

- To raises awareness, breaks the silence, and changes negative social norms around Menstruation.
- To build support structure to help these student during their menstruation

3.0 METHODOLOGY

1. Poster presentation
2. Plenary session
3. Participatory/interactive session

4.0 ACTIVITIES

4.0.1 SUMMARY OF STATE ACTIVITIES

ABUJA

This activity started with an Opening prayers was said by a Muslim and Christian student Aisha Bello and Joy Effong Okon respectively

Welcome remarks were given by the National Coordinator of NINERELA+ Nigeria Amber Itohan Erinmwine. In the course of her speech, she listed the objectives of the program. She encouraged the student not to be ashamed of themselves during menstruation instead they should come out to embrace it with pride as it is a natural thing. During her poster presentation, she engaged the student to give their own understanding of the following,

- What is menstruation?
- What is menstrual cycle?
- When in life do period starts and stop?
- What is Cramp?

The students made attempts to answer all the questions. However, the National Coordinator emphasized with an in-depth explanation to all the responses from the students.

During the interactive sessions, students were allowed to ask individual questions concerning menstruation, the menstruation cycle and the menstrual hygiene management process.

The welcome songs, dance and drama presented by the students, added beautiful colour to the program.

KADUNA

Through the CHES program, and with the help of the Kaduna state coordinator, the World Menstrual Hygiene day was help across churches and mosques under INERELA+ Nigerian support.

While some mosques and churches imported this activity into their health week program, some help the program as a stand-alone activity.

The WMH day was held in Abubaka Saidq mosque in conjunction with Asarussahaba mosque due to the fasting program. An imam was invited as a key facilitator. His key note speech focused on why women are the first and the best teachers for their children. During this time, he said there is nowhere in the holy Quran that said parents should not discuss sex with their children. The facilitator reiterated that if the parents don't teach their children and guide them at home, someone somewhere will teach them the wrong thing and mislead them in the process. He also spoke on early marriage which he said is another form of child abuse. According to the facilitator, most people give their female children out early for marriage because of poverty but when the children become victims of VVF they still look for money to treat them because by then the man must have abandoned her. He encouraged everyone to see that menstruation is not a bad thing rather it's a sign that a girl has become a woman and hence should be supported to live without any form of stigmatization. He also informed the men that supporting their wives to provide menstrual pads for their children and young girls is not a taboo, rather a good sign of fatherly care, love and support.

In Cherubin and Seraphine Church, the World Menstrual Hygiene day focused on advising parents to always learn to provide sanitary pads for their female children during menstruation. Only few parents admitted providing support to their female children once they start seeing their menses and during menstruation. A session was held for the girl children where they were taught personal hygiene and importance of seeking parental support rather than visiting the chemists during menstrual difficulties.

BENUE

In Benue state, the CHES program leveraged on the menstrual hygiene day to educate congregation on issues around menstrual hygiene and its management. Topics around sexual gender based violence around women and the girl child were also discussed. Participants were given an expose on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and why men should be advocated of SRHR for women both in their families, congregations and the communities at large.

ONDO

The INERELA+ Nigeria Team in Ondo state in conjunction with Blissful Christian Home, celebrated the menstrual hygiene day at Fiwasaye Girls Grammar School. In-school adolescent girl and their teacher were taught menstrual hygiene management, and Sexual and Reproductive health rights. Sanitary pads were also distributed to participants after the program.

ENUGU

The INERELA+ Nigerian Team in Enugu state took their campaign and advocacy to a girls secondary school in Enugu. During this activity, they were able to educate the participants with

basic tips to an effective menstrual hygiene system, the food that would be able to supplement for blood loss during the menstruation period and the importance of insisting in using pads rather than pieces of cloths.

OGUN

Ogun state were also part of the Menstrual Hygiene day celebration as they reached in-school female adolescent on the basics and importance of menstrual hygiene management.

5.0 ACHIEVEMENTS/OUTPUTS

- The introduction of the “Sisters in Health and Empowerment” (the SHE’s) Club in GSS Abuja.
- The inauguration of an 11 in-school adolescent girls as lead advocates for the SHE’s Club in GSS Abuja.
- Below is a breakdown of the number of people reached.

S/NO	STATE	MALE	FEMALE	PWD	TOTAL
1	Abuja	0	147	0	147
2	Ondo	120	1500	0	1620
3	Enugu	5	130	0	135
4	Kaduna	482	776	0	1258
5	Ogun	15	65	0	80
6	Benue	6	15	0	21
				Grand Total	3261

6.0 CHALLENGES

There was not enough time for this activity. Because this activity was mostly an in-school activity, it was made to fit into the school allotted time.

7.0 LESSON LEARNT

- The men should be equipped to have supportive and good attitude to their female during menstruation.

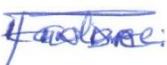
- The female students feel more comfortable discussing with fellow female issues around menstruation.
- Teachers should be trained to provide supportive in-school mentoring to the female student on issues around menstruation.
- There are still negative myths around menstruation and menstrual cycles local communities in Kaduna and Benue, especially the Muslim communities.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- More behavioural change advocacy around issues of menstruation and menstrual hygiene should be scaled up among men in rural communities in INERELA+ Supported congregations.
- School teachers should be trained as mentor-mothers around issues of menstruation and menstrual hygiene for in-school adolescent girls.

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9.0 APPENDIX 1: PHOTOGRAPHS.



The formation of the SHE'S Club in Government Secondary School in Jibi, Abuja



Menstrual Hygiene Education Day in Enugu State



World Menstrual Hygiene day in Ondo State

Cross-section of Participants in Kaduna



Participants in Kaduna State



Cross-section of Participants in Abuja