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**MAPPING OF SWEDISH AID
ADDRESSING MENSTRUATION**

Elin Bergenlöv

Mapping of Swedish Aid Addressing Menstruation

Elin Bergenlöv

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to

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Elin Bergenlöv

In the end of 2018, I spent three months in Tanzania to collect material for my master's thesis. In my thesis, I addressed how, and in what ways, Tanzanian non-governmental organizations were working with menstruation-related issues to disband the stigma. My interesting findings after interviewing 17 different organizations on local, regional, and international level, were the specific strategies that they implemented in their operations. For instance, they used target group analysis to influence policy making from the local level, to gain leverage regarding the import of menstrual products and in changing harmful social norms. Moreover, they had a genuine focus on the menstruators, and not obstacles such as the family situation, limitations in terms of culture, religion, and prevailed poverty. The greatest experience from this field work was doubtless the possibility to listen to the individual narratives, and to understand why menstruation must be addressed in development cooperation to reduce inequality, poverty, and unjust living conditions.

Abbreviations

HUM	Humanitarian (Aid)
MHH	Menstrual health and hygiene
MHM	Menstrual hygiene management
LGBTQIA	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual, Transgender, Genderqueer, Queer, Intersex, Agender, Asexual and other queer-identifying persons
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene

Organizational names

FDA	Food and Drug administration
GMC	Global Menstrual Collective
GWSP	Global Water Security & Sanitation Partnership
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency (Sweden)
SHF	Sanitation Hygiene Fund
PSI	Population Services International
UN	United Nations
UN HQ	United Nations Head Quarters
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WSSCC	Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council

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Foreword by the EBA

Roughly a quarter of the world's population menstruates. About half the population have, or will have, experienced menstruation. Everyone, the whole global population, is affected, directly or indirectly, by the consequences of not treating menstruation as a healthy, natural process. For the individual, menstrual policies based on ignorance and neglect lead to inadequate sanitary solutions and losses in schooling and work days. Period poverty, the lack of means to access menstrual products, is a reality for many women and girls. Together with shame and discrimination, the result is a lower quality of life than needed. In the aggregate, this translates to inferior health, lower human capital formation and slower economic development than what appropriate policies would entail. Few other aspects of life are so little addressed while causing concern for so many. In this working paper, Elin Bergenlöv maps the extent of Sweden's engagement in the area of menstrual hygiene and health in development cooperation. Of forty-eight public policy documents reviewed, the author finds 'menstruation' to be mentioned three times. In terms of volumes of bilateral aid, the sum of core support focussing on menstruation and interventions explicitly targeting menstruation is estimated to about 50 MSEK per year. The type of contributions varies, but many are in the form of education on safe and healthy menstrual management, and efforts for men and boys to better understand the menstrual cycle. It is our hope that this this mapping will be of use to those at the MFA, Sida and civil society organisations that are actively working in the area of menstrual health and hygiene. EBA working papers are shorter studies that investigate a question of limited scope or that complements a regular EBA study. Working papers are not subject to a formal decision from the expert group but instead reviewed by the secretariat before publication. The authors are, as with other EBA publications, responsible for the content of the report and its conclusions.

Stockholm, May 2021

Jan Pettersson, Managing Director

Sammanfattning

Den här rapporten ämnar kartlägga i vilken utsträckning menstruation synliggörs och prioriteras i svenskt internationellt utvecklingssamarbete. En sådan samlad bild saknas idag, och är relevant för att inkludera menshälsa som en fråga i utvecklingssamarbetet. Kartläggningen avser besvara fem övergripande frågeställningar; 1) Hur, och i vilken utsträckning prioriteras menstruation i svenskt utvecklingssamarbete? 2) Vilka organisationer finansierade av svenskt bistånd arbetar med menstruell hälsa och hygien, och vilka är insatserna? 3) Finns det likheter och skillnader att se i hur menstruation inkluderas i utvecklingssamarbetet och kan eventuella skillnader påverka insatser? 4) Kan vi se någon skillnad över tid under åren 2000–2020, vad gäller prioriteringar och insatser för förbättrad menshälsa och betydelsen av menstruation? och slutligen 5) Skildrar organisationer som arbetar med frågan potentiella hinder i arbetet?

I ett första steg har relevanta policydokument sammanställts och data från OECD/DAC, Open aid och Sidas CSO-databas samlats. Sökorden i) menstruation, ii) menstrual, and iii) hygiene och iv) sanitary har tillämpats i läsningen av varje dokument för att urskilja huruvida menstruation utgör en del av prioriteringar och insatser. Sökorden har även tillämpats under analysen av dataseten, där resultaten av Sidas samlade mens-relaterade insatser sammanställts. I ett andra steg har underlag från strategiska partnerorganisationer till Sida genom aktörmöten inhämtats. Slutligen har resultaten vägts samman och summerats utifrån de fem frågeställningarna.

Tidigare forskning fokuserar på att urskilja hur menstruation sedan tidigare varit en fråga för biologi och reproduktiv hälsa, men idag är en fråga för jämställdhet och möjligheten att delta i samhället på lika villkor utifrån sociala, ekonomiska, kulturella och traditionella aspekter. Den tidigare forskningen har en bredd och inkluderar allt från att utvärdera vilka sanitetsprodukter som är säkrast för hälsan och bäst för miljön, till att utvärdera hur många flickor som missar sin skolgång på grund av brist på rent vatten, toaletter och trygga utrymmen att sköta sin mens på. Även aspekter som personer med funktionsvariationer som menstruerar och den stora förlusten av arbetskraft till följd av menstruationssmärter lyfts idag i stor utsträckning.

Det är mycket svårt att fastställa hur mycket bistånd som går till specifika mensrelaterade insatser då dessa ofta sker inom ramen för Sidas samlade

anslag för civilsamhällesorganisationer. Dessa redovisas inte alltid som enskilda insatser. Uppskattningen från sammanställningen är att ca. 307 miljoner kronor har lagts på insatser som på något sätt direkt lyfter, nämner eller belyser menstruation sedan 2013. Räknas även insatser som indirekt prioriterar mens inom ett program eller en insats, uppskattas summan till omkring 420 miljoner kronor. Denna inkluderar både det riktade biståndet till särskilda insatser och kärnstödet till organisationer där varje enskild insats inte går att spåra.

Delar av kartläggningen sträcker sig så långt tillbaka som 20 år, men efter att insatser identifierats och policydokument analyserats är det tydligt att de flesta insatserna skett under de senaste 5 åren, och att det idag och framåt till och med år 2025, finns många satsningar som ännu inte utvärderats. De huvudsakliga sektorerna som belyser menstruation som en utvecklingsfråga är sektorn för hälsa, tätt följt av jämställdhet, WASH (vatten, sanitet och hygien) och utbildning. Även den humanitära sektorn inkluderar menstruation i relativt stor utsträckning i sina insatser.

Genomgången av relevanta policydokument visar att menstruation och menshälsa förekommer sparsamt, enbart i tre av 48 dokument. De tre dokument som benämner menstruation som prioritet är strategin för Sveriges samarbete med FN:s barnfond (Unicef) 2018–2022 och två regeringsskrivelser: Policyramverk för svenskt utvecklingssamarbete och humanitärt bistånd samt Sveriges feministiska utrikespolitik. Vidare indikerar resultaten av kartläggningen att civilsamhället har en ledande och mycket betydande roll i implementering och verkställande av mensrelaterade insatser inom utvecklingssamarbetet. Mensrelaterade insatser är dock sparsamt rapporterade i Sidas CSO-databas. Detta ger intryck av färre insatser på området än vad som faktiskt genomförs.

Resultaten visar att det finns frågor som relaterar till intim hälsa, såsom ”Period poverty” (mensfattigdom) och andra mensrelaterade utmaningar som menssmärtor som inte förefaller beaktas i lika stor utsträckning som exempelvis utbildningsinsatser eller WASH-insatser för att bygga toaletter. Betydelsen av menstruation varierar i olika insatser, program och hos olika organisationer. Den skiljer sig beroende på kontext, om menstruation skrivs ut i textform eller är implicit, om det gäller humanitära insatser eller utvecklingssamarbete, samt på vilken nivå frågan lyfts. Med nivå menas multilateral, bilateral/nationell eller den lokala nivån. En universell definition av ’menstrual health’ är något eftersträvansvärt för att forskare, aktörer och beslutsfattare ska kunna arbeta på ett sätt som för frågan

framåt i utvecklingssamarbetet. En sådan har nyligen lanserats av nätverket Global Menstrual Collective.

Även om menstruation och menstruell hälsa är en relativt stor och flerdisciplinär fråga inom akademien globalt (med fokus inom hälso- och utbildningsforskning) så är menstruation som aspekt i utvecklingssamarbete och bistånd sällan förekommande inom akademisk forskning, även om frågan blivit mer aktuellt idag i jämförelse med för 10 år sedan.

Sammantaget finns det många insatser på området idag och mycket investeras i frågor som på olika sätt prioriterar menstruation inom ett program eller i åtgärdsplaner. Större, globala nätverk med medlemmar från både högre nivå, regional- och lokal nivå har utformats för att möjliggöra att större resurser satsas och mer kunskap genereras. Insatserna ser överlag olika ut, och länder väljer att närma sig menstruation, kunskap och hälsa samt det existerande stigmat på olika sätt. De insatser som är återkommande i kartläggningen är utbildande insatser med ambitionen att inkludera män och pojkar för full förståelse av menscykeln och dess påverkan på menstruerande personers liv, samt utbildande insatser som endast riktar sig till menstruerande personer med fokus på fertilitet, sex och relationer och hur man hanterar sin mens på ett tryggt sätt. Utbildning tror många forskare och aktörer är nyckeln till att förbättra hälsan, förståelsen och hållbarheten kring menstruation.

I den sista delen av kartläggningen förs en diskussion om vilka slutsatser som är rimliga att dra baserat på resultaten. Utifrån en samlad definition kan en utforska vilken sektor som är mest passande för att driva mensfrågan, alternativt om frågan ska överlappa flera sektorer för största effektivitet. Menstruation är både en biologisk funktion och det har en social funktion på så vis att det är en fråga för policyutveckling och självbestämmande, jämställdhet och egenmakt för kvinnor samt för hållbar utveckling. Den bör således överlappa flera sektorer så som hälsa, jämställdhet, ekonomi, säkerhet, utbildning och arbetsmarknad för ett samhälle där mänskliga rättigheter tillgodoses med en öppen och kunskapsbaserad syn på mens utan tabu och fördomar, att alla som har mens har tillgång till mensskydd oavsett ekonomiska eller sociala förutsättningar. Det ska finnas en grundläggande tillgänglighet till kunskap om kroppen och menscykeln för alla, och en infrastruktur som tillgodoser behov för den person som menstruerar.

Summary

The aim of this study is to fill a knowledge gap by mapping out menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) interventions in Swedish development cooperation.

Such an overview may facilitate the work ahead to include menstrual health as a matter for development cooperation. The study attempts to answer five questions; 1) How, and to what extent is menstruation addressed in Swedish development cooperation? 2) Which agencies funded by Swedish aid are working with menstruation in development cooperation, and what are the contributions? 3) Are there any differences or similarities to be seen in contributions for MHH, and in how menstruation is addressed? 4) Is there any significant difference over time regarding contributions and policies for MHH, during the period 2000–2021? 5) Are there any potential obstacles working with menstruation in development cooperation? In the final section the author reflects upon what conclusions could be drawn from the results.

Previous research focuses a lot on distinguishing how menstruation has previously been more of an issue for biology and reproductive health, but today, a question for gender equality, especially the opportunity to participate in society on equal terms based on social, economic, cultural, and traditional aspects. Previous research on menstruation includes numerous aspects, from evaluations of sanitary products for safety and climate impact, to evaluations of how many girls miss out on school due to lack of clean water, lockable toilets, and safe spaces to manage their menses with dignity. Also, the aspects of menstruating people with functional variations, and the great loss of labour due to menstrual pains is addressed.

In the 48 reviewed public policy documents, ‘menstruation’ was mentioned three times: in the Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance (under Equal health); in Sweden’s feminist foreign policy (in relation to SRHR, WASH, and education); and in the strategy for Sweden's cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2018–2022.

Measuring the amount of Swedish aid for specific menstrual-related contributions is challenging, as these are often part of the framework of Sida's total allocation for civil society organizations, and not reported as individual contributions. In the mapping, the bilateral funding explicitly

targeting menstruation is estimated at approximately 307 MSEK since 2013. The total funding for menstruation in Swedish development cooperation (including both targeted assistance for specific initiatives and core support for organizations where each individual effort is difficult to trace) is estimated to around 427 MSEK during the last 8 years.

The results show that today, MHH is part of the targets for both the Health, WASH, SRHR and the education sector. The health sector dominates, closely followed by gender equality, WASH, and education. Humanitarian assistance is also a sector that includes menstruation in contributions. Furthermore, the results indicate that the civil society has a leading and significant role for menstruation-related contributions in development cooperation. However, the absence of reported menstrual-related contributions in Sida's CSO database gives the impression of fewer contributions than actually implemented.

The results demonstrate that a delicate subject like menstruation is not mentioned to a large extent in development cooperation. This also applies to period poverty, and other menstrual-related challenges like menstrual pain. They are not considered to the same extent in the implementation of interventions or processes, in comparison with, for example, educational initiatives or WASH-interventions for building toilets. The significance of menstruation also differs in relation to context, whether menstruation is explicitly written out or is implicitly mentioned, whether it concerns humanitarian interventions or development cooperation, and at which level the issue is raised. By level is meant multilateral, bilateral or local level. A universal definition of 'menstrual health' is desirable for researchers, actors, and decision-makers to be able to apply menstruation as a particularly significant question for future development cooperation. Such a definition has recently been launched by the Global Menstrual Collective.

Overall, there are numerous contributions in the area of menstruation today, and many actors invest to prioritize menstruation within a program or action plan. Larger, global networks with members from both the high level, regional and the local level have been designed to achieve greater availability for resources and to generate more knowledge. The type of contributions varies, and countries choose to approach menstruation, knowledge, and the existing stigma in different ways. However, many contributions are in the form of education efforts to men and boys in order to better understand the menstrual cycle, and to menstruating people with a focus on fertility, sex, and relations, and how to manage your

period in a safe way. Education is believed by many researchers and actors to be the key of improving health, to ensure awareness and sustainability around menstruation.

In the last section, the author reflects on reasonable conclusions to draw, based on the results. Based on a universal definition of menstrual health, it could be possible to investigate what sector is most suitable for addressing menstruation as a question for development cooperation, or whether the question should overlap several sectors for greater efficiency. Menstruation is a biological function but also has a social function as it is a matter for policy development and equality for women as well as for sustainable development. Thus, it should overlap several sectors such as health, gender equality, economy, security, education, and the labour market, for a society where human rights are met with an open and knowledge-based view of menstruation without taboos and prejudices and that every menstruator has access to menstrual protection regardless of economic or social preconditions. There should be a basic availability of knowledge about the body and the menstrual cycle for everyone, and an infrastructure that meets the needs of the person who is menstruating.

1 Introduction

The Terminology Action Group of the Global Menstrual Collective (GMC) defines menstrual health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in relation to the menstrual cycle” (Hennegan et al. 2021)¹. As argued by UNFPA (2018), increasing the awareness and knowledge about menstrual health and hygiene (MHH), and to disband the stigma and culture of silence, are fundamental steps towards reducing poverty and social exclusion. In development cooperation, menstruation is addressed in several sectors like water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and education (Sommer et al. 2015a, PSI et al. 2021). The United Nations acknowledges menstruation and its fundamentality in terms of human rights to equality, health, housing, water, sanitation, education, freedom of religion, safe working conditions and being able to take part in social and cultural life without discrimination (United Nations 2019). Today, menstruation is rather a catalyst for religious change and menstruators who has suffered from being excluded from their homes and held responsible for being impure and dirty, are now able to enter a temple, cook food or even contradict religiously motivated gender-discrimination (Cohen 2020).

The aim of this study is to map out menstrual health and hygiene interventions in Swedish development cooperation during the period of 2000-2021. Based on the mapping, the study attempts to answer to the following questions:

- How, and to what extent is menstruation addressed in Swedish development cooperation?
- Which agencies funded by Swedish aid are working with menstruation in development cooperation, and what are the contributions?
- Are there any differences or similarities to be seen in contributions for MHH, and in how menstruation is addressed?
- Is there any significant difference over time regarding contributions and policies for MHH, during the period of 2000–2021?
- Are there any potential obstacles working with menstruation in development cooperation?
- What conclusions could be drawn from the results?

¹ Developed by the Terminology Action Group of the Global Menstrual Collective 2021.

According to several researchers and stakeholders, MHH is missing in the international development cooperation-debate. In the SDGs, it is embedded under sub-goals without its own priority (UNFPA 2018, PSI et al. 2021). For Sweden, gender equality and SRHR are two main priorities for development cooperation and are addressed in several regional and global strategies and policies. The focus on sexual rights in relation to human rights came to permeate several agendas in global development work, and the policy progress for Sweden can be said to have gone from a “population-based approach” towards a SRHR approach. In Swedish public policy documents, equality and SRHR has always been prioritized, and Sweden is an important donor for organisations initiating interventions for MHH on a global, regional, and local level. In 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Kairo was held and enabled a more assembled understanding of SRHR globally with 179 member states, resulting in 243 recommendations. SRHR is highly prioritized since the implementation of the ICPD-agreement but remain controversial in many parts of the world (Handbook Sweden’s feminist foreign policy 2018). In Swedish aid, support to SRHR is highly prioritized with almost 60% of aid to the health sector focused on SRHR (Sida 2021b).

The Swedish Feminist foreign policy has the ambition to forward women’s and girls’ health and living conditions, and every individual’s right to decide over his/her own body. These attributes are closely linked to the Policy framework for development cooperation and humanitarian assistance (Skr. 2016/17:60) in terms of equality, good health, the labour market, education, and human rights. In 2018, the Government decided on a thematic strategy for equality. During the period 2018–2022, Sida was commissioned to distribute the aid for initiatives in the field of gender equality. This includes both strengthening normative frameworks for gender equality and to increase the security for organizations working with gender equality, to allow access to gender-disaggregated statistics. According to this strategy, Sida will work, among other things, with innovative initiatives and with the inclusion of boys and men as actors in the movement for gender equality. The presence of boys and men in the discourse of menstruation in development cooperation is more evident today, and more important than ever (Mahon et al. 2015; Peranovic, Bentley 2016).

Menstruation could be a religiously, traditionally, and culturally subject of taboo. In many cultures, the menstruator is banned from the village or society for about 5–7 days during menstruation because of impurity and

shame. Menstruation has during a long time been referred to by women themselves as “the curse” (Gottlieb 2020). For example, Alma Gottlieb (2020) states that menstrual blood is the subject that has endowed menstruation with mystical properties. It’s also challenging for menstruators to report their conditions or pain or to consult medical staff, in fear of being considered scandalous or misunderstood. In general, the view of menstruation is that it’s “a women’s issue”. Researches, and policymakers agrees to for addressing menstruation as question for sustainable development, it cannot be considered a women’s issue. The aid sector should be aware of the role of men and boys in the movement (Guilló-Arakistain 2020). In international development cooperation, the movement of challenging the menstrual stigma and taboo is increasing, mostly in civil society, but we can also see changes in national policy frameworks and guidelines.

2 Previous research

Menstruation has gained less attention in the female bodily rights-debate, compared to other movements such as for example the right to abortion (Dahlqvist 2018). MHH as a concept is comparatively new, but awareness of the menstrual cycle is considerably older (C. Bobler 2020). In the early 1970s, researchers started to investigate the field of menstrual health, the cycle, and women's bodily rights. Studies like "If men could menstruate" by Gloria Steinem, and "The society for menstrual cycle research" was launched in 1977 and 1978. Today, the lack of a coherent language for describing genitals, sexuality and the menstrual cycle is problematic both regarding your own understanding of your body, and in terms of power structures (Stubbs & Sterling 2020). The lecturer Inga T. Winkler (Columbia University) writes that "Menstruation unites the personal and the political, the intimate and the public, and the psychological and the socio-cultural" (Winkler 2020). This could be a solid explanation of the importance of menstruation in everyday discourses.

One approach that has been applied in previous research is to study the difference between menstruation as biological function, and the social function as norm and "a women's issue". In 2020, the Palgrave Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies was released. The authors ask themselves why this book is the first, while this biological phenomenon is old as humanity itself? The book brings together the body of knowledge in critical menstruation studies and compile research from the 70s until today and has been written by 134 contributors from 23 countries. It explores all perspectives of menstruation, like the historical, political, embodied, cultural, religious, social, health, economic, artistic, and literary perspective (Bobel, C. et al. 2020).

The previous research reflects upon different forms of knowledge shaping the research for menstruation. Studies concerning MHH are both qualitative in terms of ethnographic studies with focus groups or specific individuals, and quantitative, focusing on country-level and policy-change. A common sector that has been the entry point for menstrual health in development cooperation is the sector for Water, sanitation and hygiene, WASH (Ibid.). The narratives for menstruation are mainly the approaches of women's rights, poverty, fragility, WASH, education, and the political/policy approach in terms of issues of stigma and social norms (Patkar 2020). The perspectives of menstruation-studies are numerous and began in the 1970s. The research field spans different sectors such as public health, SRHR, education, economic growth, water and sanitation,

humanitarian interventions, and climate catastrophes. The most common sectors for menstruation-related studies are probably in the Educational, WASH- and SRHR perspective. Over the years, menstruation is also to be seen in other sectors such as labour rights and LGBTQIA-rights. The aspect of productivity loss due to Menstruation-related symptoms (MRSs), and the right to ‘menstrual leave’ is a comparatively new aspect in modern research on MHH (Schoep et al. 2019). The aspect of menstruators with disabilities and their specific challenges is also emerging in the academic field (Wilbur et al. 2019).

Menstrual products have been evaluated in previous research. The results showed that mainly tampons have met resistance over the years. In the 1980s, around 800 cases of severe illness and 20 deaths were linked to toxic shock life-threatening bacterial infection (Menstrual TSS). The results showed that menstruation is a vulnerable condition, and dependent on the vaginal environment (King Reame 2020). Likewise, research has been conducted for menstrual cups. A systematic review of international studies on menstrual cup leakage, acceptability, and safety was made by Anna Maria van Eijk et al. in 2019 for Lancet public health, to explore menstrual cup availability to inform programmes. The menstrual cup is one of today’s most popular menstrual hygiene devices, both in terms of climate sustainability, affordability, and the possibility for menstruators to manage their period with dignity (van Eijk et al. 2019).

Regarding affordability, period poverty is a phenomenon that affects menstruators lives negatively. Period poverty is caused due to lack of economic or social access to pads or other menstrual products, underdeveloped social services. Researchers has contributed with studies regarding period poverty in terms of economic empowerment, absence from labour market and school (PSI et al. 2021). In Scotland, in 2020, the government decided to change the policy and end period taxes, also known as Menstrual Equity, a movement to abolish period taxes. What to bear in mind is that period poverty is a world-wide phenomenon, and not only in low-income countries. There are examples from United States and Great Britain where young girls suffer from period poverty.

The Swedish journalist Anna Dahlqvist who has written the book; “It’s only Blood” (2018), states the fact that a functioning menstrual health is a global issue because of the lack of knowledge around the world, that women and girls are missing hours in school or at work because of not having the possibility to protect themselves from bleeding and leaking and take care of their menstrual period with dignity and in privacy. In 2012 in

Uganda, Kerala, a survey was made for girls in schools around in the country regarding menstruation and accessibility to sanitation products like pads or menstrual cups. In general, the result was that girls were missing about 24 days in school per year of being home of fear for leakage or shame in general (Dahlqvist 2018). A range of studies on the field has been conducted over a period of 15 years (Benshaul-Tolonen et al. 2020). In the newly launched report Making the case for investing in menstrual health & hygiene (Garcon et al. 2021), looking at Sweden as one of the most prominent donors for menstrual health, the authors indicate a shift in investments for MHH programs and initiatives over time. The prioritized area of investment is menstrual health products like sanitary pads, and secondly, investments in WASH. There are less investments in initiatives addressing social norms and policy, also in sexual and reproductive health services. The report also highlights the difficulty to track different sectoral funding addressing MHH specifically.

3 Methodological approach

All programs and initiatives represented in the results are funded by Swedish aid. Appendix 1 is a review of MHH-related interventions, and Appendix 2 is a review of Government policies and strategies. The process of the mapping consists of a procedure of several steps, put together to paint a big picture of MHH in Swedish aid. As a first step, data was collected from Sida's CSO database (the civil society organisations database), searching for Menstrua, and one dataset from Open aid with the search words Menstrua OR Hygiene. The results were categorized in tables with organisational name, year, funding, title of project, project description and source, and referred to if menstruation is a target or could be interpreted as a sub-goal within the specific project or program.

Thereafter, I compiled relevant public policy documents for strategic partnership organisations to Sida and from Sweden's leading authorities and actors and summarized these in Appendix 2. The time frame for the collected data is 2000–2021, but some of the government strategies and policy documents are valid until 2025. I used the report "Sweden's work on global health – implementing the 2030 Agenda" (a complementing document to the Swedish action plan for the 2030 Agenda), for support for collecting specific policy documents of relevance. The applied search words in the Swedish policy documents was Menstruation OR Sanitet OR Hygien OR Flickor OR Hälsa. The reviewed documents are compiled and categorized with type of document, sector, source, if menstruation is addressed as target, and what is being said. Documents with no mention of menstruation or meanings interpreted as MHH-related, were still compiled in Appendix 2, but not further reviewed.

Thereafter, I contacted stakeholders for informative dialogues. Sida has multi-year agreements with 16 Swedish strategic partner organisations (SPO). In this mapping, I've been in contact with persons working with Sida-funded MHH-contributions in 10 of the SPOs to attain results of contributions and funding's for MHH. From these conversations, I could identify specific interventions, changes over time and obstacles working with this subject. I posed several questions regarding MHH-related programs or projects. The questions were formulated to gain a broader understanding of what is being done, and why: 1. Can you describe your main priorities in projects or ongoing programs focusing on menstrual health? 2. How is menstruation framed in your work? (with framed I'm interested in how it's conceptualized and what is the focus; for example, the stigma, hygiene, water, sanitation, culture, or education). 3. Could you

say something about your financial priorities in terms of menstrual health? 4. Could you see any similarities or differences in the financial priorities from 2000-2021 in terms of addressing MHH? 5. In which sectors are you working with MHM/MHH, and in which sector is it desirable to address menstruation? 6. Can you identify any potential obstacles in working with a subject like menstruation in development cooperation? Further on, I categorized these Sida-funded projects as: country, project title, sector, financial flow, time frame for the project, a short project-description of each project targeting MHH, total budget and approx. budget for projects addressing MHH specifically.

Finally, my attempt to provide answers to five research questions is presented in Section 4.

A limitation with the study is the difficulty to account for the contributions and interventions and additional challenges for menstruators due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Following my dialogue with stakeholders, some examples of challenges are presented in the report.

4 Results

Throughout this section, each conclusion is presented in the sub-section for the respective research question. In short, a summary view is provided in the following bullet points:

- Actors from different sectors agree that MHH must be addressed beyond the biological perspective and could be integrated as a question for sustainable development.
- It is hard to give an account of the total aid funding for menstrual health in Swedish development cooperation, because numerous of the contributions are integrated in the CSO core support.² The estimated total funding for the contributions explicitly targeting menstruation is 307 MSEK between 2013 and 2025.
- The main sector for addressing MHH in Swedish development cooperation is the sector for Health, closely followed by Gender equality, WASH and Education.
- Menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) are mentioned three times in public policy documents for strategic partnership organisations to Sida and from Sweden's leading authorities and actors.
- The meaning and significance of menstruation varies in Swedish development cooperation in terms of context, in humanitarian aid interventions and policy frameworks.
- The civil society has the lead in addressing MHH in development cooperation.
- According to the findings, there are contributions targeting menstruation in 22 countries, globally.
- A comprehensive universal definition of menstrual health to develop further interventions and facilitate current initiatives is desirable.
- There are MHH-related contributions not declared for in Sida's CSO-database, this affects the general understanding of the quantity of contributions and to what extent menstruation is being addressed in Swedish development cooperation.

² On 02/06/2016, "The strategy for support via Swedish civil society organisations 2016–2022" (hereinafter the 'CSO strategy'), which governs the activities conducted within the appropriation item "Support via Swedish civil society organisations", the so-called CSO appropriation.

The total (approx.) funding for menstruation in Swedish development cooperation

The calculation is based on the list in Appendix 1, including all core support and earmarked support in Swedish SEK. In my calculations, the bilateral funding explicitly targeting menstruation sums to 307 MSEK for the years 2013–2025. The total funding core support and earmarked support for menstruation in Swedish development cooperation has been 427 MSEK during the last 8 years, starting from 2013 until 2021. In the mapping the studied period is 2000–2021, but as stated earlier, some of the government strategies and policy documents are valid until 2025, and therefore many contributions run until 2025. It's difficult to value the exact amount for the efforts explicitly targeting menstruation within the total sum, because of the large part of the total sum that is core support from Sida, and due to lack of funding information. The multilateral support to for example UNICEF from Sweden is not included in the summation but still included in Appendix 1.

4.1 How, and to what extent is menstruation addressed in Swedish development cooperation and aid?

4.1.1 Results from the Sida-funded contributions for MHH

The results from the mapping shows on contributions in 22 countries; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, India, Namibia, Niger, Yemen, Regional South Africa, South Africa, Syria, South Sudan, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Liberia, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and Vietnam. Searching for the word Menstrua in Open aid, I got 16 results for MHH-related contributions. In attempt to find as many contributions there is, I expanded the search by searching for hygiene in Open aid instead of Menstrua. I found 157 contributions that could be interpreted as menstruation-related, because these contributions were related to WASH, HIV-research, or basic water supply. The only contribution found explicitly targeting menstruation was one entrepreneur-supported study about making sanitary pads. In sum, few projects focus on women's reproductive health and education, and

none specifically on menstruation. The contributions are mainly located in East Africa, and the aid is bilateral in general.

Sweden takes a horizontal approach to development cooperation (Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, Skr. 2016:17/60). Hence, linking several dimensions of sustainable development over different sectors, for example environmental, economic, and social sectors. In the reviewed public policy documents, 'menstruation' was mentioned three times. The document that highlights MHH is the Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, in the sector for Equal health (5.7); and Sweden's feminist foreign policy (Skr. 2019/20:17), in the sector for SRHR and WASH, and in the Strategy for Sweden's cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2018–2022. In the policy document, the concept of "menstrual health" is applied. The words menstruation and menstrual health is not represented in the policy documents to a large extent, but could be interpreted as being a target or a sub-goal through wordings such as "hygiene for women", or "equal accessibility to good health for both women and men".

Different sectors address the same question (MHH) but in different ways. In Swedish foreign policy, MHH is explicitly mentioned in the health-sector. In other sectors, MHH is addressed only implicitly. In interventions to access water and sanitation, the priority is to build secured and lockable toilets and latrines in schools, and in other public spaces. The results show that today, MHH is part of the targets for both the Health, WASH, SRHR and the educational sector (see Appendix 2). MHH-related interventions and contributions in development cooperation has been initiated during the last ten years. According to the findings in the data from Open aid, (see Appendix 1), menstruation or MHH-related contributions is to be found in the following aid-sectors; Counteract sexually transmitted diseases incl. HIV/AIDS, Reproductive health, Health education, Democratic participation and the civil society, Water Supply & Sanitation, Other multisector, Population Policies/Programmes & Reproductive Health, Basic health care/Basic health, Gender Equality and SRHR and education.

Counting the contributions (Appendix 1), gives the result that a majority belongs to the health sector. The Health sector (including 'basic health', 'general health' and 'reproductive health') includes 30 contributions; followed by Gender equality (22), Education (17, including health education, education in reproductive health), WASH (15), Population

Policies/Programmes & Reproductive Health (14), Humanitarian assistance (12), and Democratic participation & civil society (9, including labour rights).

4.1.2 Results from reading Sida's annual reports from 2000–2020

The annual reports from 2000–2020 refers to the importance of addressing menstruation as aspect of development cooperation and giving examples of successful interventions and initiatives. Conclusions to be drawn from the annual reports is that menstruation became prioritized from the year of 2012 and has been represented each year in contributions and strategies until today. MHH and menstruation are not addressed as explicit targets or goals in the annual reports, but it's prioritized within almost all interventions and programs in the WASH, Equality, Health, and educational sector. The search words i) menstruation, ii) sanitet, iii) hygiene, and iv) flickor and v) hälsa are mentioned momentarily in descriptions of practical initiatives and interventions from 2001 to 2020. The main issues raised from 2001 to 2021, are menstrual regulation (abortion) and equal access to school attendance.

4.2 Which agencies funded by Swedish aid are working with menstruation in development cooperation, and what are the contributions?

The overall findings from searching in the CSO data base for Swedish aid cooperation in the civil society is that there are several good examples on programs, policy changing-efforts, and contributions that highlights MHH. The stakeholders operate on grassroot level mostly, but also internationally by policy advocacy, interventions, and in implementing programs with Swedish aid-support to address menstruation. The result looking at different actors and programs within several sectors shows that it has been difficulties in reaching out for the target group, especially regarding delicate matters, like menstruation. Due to Covid-19, it has been even more difficult to reach out, and menstruators in need for sanitary products and health assurance are particularly vulnerable.

The Swedish authorities working with menstrual health as target or as a sub-goal in programs, strategies and frameworks are the Swedish foreign representations (specific embassies within the regional SRHR-strategy, later in this report the Embassy in Zimbabwe is exemplified), Sweden's government agency for development cooperation (Sida), Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm and the Swedish Institute.

The Sida-funded civil society-organisations working with menstrual health as a target in programs and strategies are; The Swedish missionaries, The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU) (unrestricted core-support), Plan International Sweden (core-support), Afrikagrupperna (Africa groups of Sweden), ForumCiv (core-support and direct support), Wise Economy Global Association, UNICEF (core-support), WSSCC (SHF) (core-support), WaterAid (core-support), and Union to union (core-support and funding for labour rights and menstruation). Plan International Sweden and WaterAid Sweden stand out in terms of how menstruation and menstrual health are prioritized in strategies and contributions during the time 2000–2020. Looking at their annual reports from 2000-until today (see Appendix 2 for each specific year), menstruation is represented almost each year. Plan Sweden is targeting menstruation from an educational approach, and WaterAid targets menstrual health in the WASH-sector.

4.2.1 Swedish authorities

Sida is the main authority that address menstruation in development cooperation. Sida has bilateral development cooperation with 35 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe, and a specific regional program for SRHR in Lusaka, Zambia. Sida highlights different narratives of menstruation, to maintain opportunities to face challenges in terms of obsolete assets, stigma, and taboos. Sida is working with menstruation within different sectors, but menstruation also has its own priority and significance. One example is Sida's involvement in Menstrual hygiene day (the 28th of May each year). It is a global platform that brings together government agencies, individuals, the private sector, civil society, and the media to catalyse advocacy and action towards a world where women and girls are no longer limited because of their periods. The MH-day is powered by 530 actors around the world and Sida is one core funder who has been organising the day the last years. When reading Sida's annual reports over the years, internal strategies and frameworks for operations and contributions, the ambition to further highlight menstruation in the

Swedish development cooperation is clear. The work with MHH has developed through a practical approach, in terms of building toilets and access to sanitary products, but today, the question of menstruation is more theoretical, and its presence is increasing on the agenda for gender equality. MHH is broader problematized in development cooperation, and include economic empowerment, labour rights, and LGBTQIA-rights to a larger extent. Sida has been participating in Menspodden, a Swedish podcast addressing menstruation in different perspectives by inviting representatives from different sectors. Sida emphasise four core questions: the importance of high-profile for these issues within leadership to disband stigma and taboos, the importance of including men and boys in the movement and educating them about menstruation preferably in early years, provision of age-adapted sexual education, and to intensify the work with MHM as a question for stigma, discrimination and in humanitarian interventions (Menspodden 2020-03-11).

The Swedish Embassy in Zimbabwe is an example in Swedish development cooperation working to achieve better menstrual health. The Embassy is working closely with grass root organisations, local authorities and with national and international partners and agencies to improve menstrual health and hygiene conditions. The aim is scaling up the access to comprehensive SRHR for women and girls in Zimbabwe. In 2019, the Zimbabwean government scrapped import duties on sanitary ware with the goal to improve supply of sanitary wear at competitive prices, and endued girls in school with sanitary products. The cooperation between Sweden and Zimbabwe for funded programs targeting MHH is expanding. In general, the MHH activities and programs targets the whole population and aims to educate and create awareness. The contributions promote access to sexual education and to disband the stigma of menstruation, for increasing involvement of the youth and to create a safe environment for help and counselling. The Embassy is working closely with both multilateral and bilateral partners for implementation and evaluation of interventions. Examples of partners are, Marie Stopes (a global organisation providing personalised contraception and safe abortion to women and girls in 37 countries across the world), Plan International and Population Services International (PSI) (a non-profit organization working for universal health, to achieve greater family planning possibilities and evolving global health funding, and influencing global and national priorities around the world). It is not possible to measure the total amount for specifically menstrual health-related contributions because the funding is within the core-support to the

country of Zimbabwe, but the projects and programmes financed by the Zimbabwean Embassy indicates on a highly prioritized agenda for MHH.

4.2.2 Strategic partner organizations (SPO) to Sida (also within the CSO appropriation from Sida)

Plan International Sweden is a development and humanitarian organisation and strategic partner organisation to Sida. Plan is working with menstrual health in humanitarian contexts, and in development cooperation. The contributions are oriented on three pillars, Sexual education and SRHR information, including knowledge about the menstrual cycle and puberty to strengthen children and young adults knowledge about their own body and to disband the stigma and taboo around menstruation, access to sanitary products to manage your period based on the menstruators special needs, and lockable toilets and safe spaces to manage your period with dignity. In relation to these pillars, Plan is integrating awareness raising and advocacy work, like communication with local government, organisations, and other stakeholders. In cooperation with Sida, Plan Sweden is recipient of the CSO appropriation and therefore it's hard to measure to what extent menstrual health initiatives and programs are funded, but in general, Plan has integrated menstruation as a core perspective in humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. Likewise, the core-support make it difficult to measure the total funding for menstrual health, but the targeted programmes indicate a highly prioritized agenda for MHH.

The Swedish mission council (SMC) is an umbrella organisation for Christian churches and organisations who operates internationally, and a strategic partner organisation to Sida receiving core support. SMC has been active in addressing MHH in operations and advocacy, and from 2017 until today (2021), the SMC has funded several MHH-related projects in Bangladesh, eastern Africa and the Middle east to increase the awareness of menstruation, enable WASH-facilities and accessibility for refugees. In general, the initiatives are in the WASH- and humanitarian assistance sectors, to reach out for people in humanitarian crises in need of basic human rights-facilities such as water and food. The programs and interventions are connected to MHH in terms of poor sexual education, the taboo and silence of menstruation, environmental risks for menstruators and lack of access to sanitary products to manage your period with dignity. (Please see Appendix 1 for detailed information about the interventions and funding's).

4.2.3 Civil society organizations (within the CSO-core support from Sida)

WaterAid is an international not-for-profit federation, determined to make clean water, decent toilets, and good hygiene normal for everyone everywhere within a generation. WaterAid has been a recipient of Swedish aid since 2014. This is the second funding-period in the cooperation, 2018-2022. WaterAid published the resource report “Why menstruation matters” in 2012, and since then, the ambition of addressing menstruation in the WASH-sector has increased in the establishment. The programs and initiatives that highlights menstruation in the WASH-interventions are targeting different groups, both women and girls, people with disabilities and non-binary menstruators. WaterAid has also been establishing the Global menstrual health collective (GMC), in collaboration with UNFPA, WSSCC (SHFund) and The case for her, to advocate and work for increasing global MHM-funding’s. During 2021, WaterAid will strengthen and enforcing new research on the evidence-based holistic approach of MHH, as a question of matter in all sectors of aid. One project, “The last taboo” was finished and reported in 2017, in cooperation with local partners as government and policy advocates, and global partners as Plan International. WaterAid was targeting menstruators in the Pacific region and initiated a qualitative study focusing on difficulties in managing one’s period with dignity and feeling secure. WaterAid shows how menstruators suffer even more due to the pandemic because of closed public toilets, schools closing due to the increased infectivity and higher pressure on water resources. Girls with menstruation are accessing menstrual products in school to a large extent, and due to lockdowns around the world the situation becomes even more challenging (GWSP 2020).

CREA world is a feminist international human rights organization based in the Global South and led by women from the Global South. CREA’s work draws upon the inherent value of a rights-based approach to sexuality and gender equality. In CREA’s holistic approach, menstruation matter to all sectors and programs working with sustainable development and aid cooperation and MHM-strategies are thus included in other strategies or programs.

Mama Cash International Women’s Fund work strategically in cooperation with several countries such as Lebanon, Turkey, El Salvador, and Zimbabwe. Mama Cash does not use menstrual health as a frame in their grant making but highlight the issues as part of their comprehensive Body portfolio. Mama cash supports women, girls, trans- and intersex-

people who are celebrating and defending control over their own lives, bodies, identities, and sexualities. The work consists of challenging practices, social norms, and policies that limit their safety and freedom. Menstrual health management, including the provision of information, fighting stigma, and advocating for access to MHM-products are part of this work.

4.2.4 Networks and councils where Sweden (Sida) contributes

The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) is a global, multi-stakeholder membership and partnership organization working to end poverty, with organizations, governments, and local entrepreneurs to improve sanitation and hygiene at scale. In 2021, the WSSCC will transfer into a Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF), as a UN agency, also funded by Sweden. Today, the UN and its member states prioritises to increase the WASH-initiatives because of current situations in the world in terms of lack of access to clean water, proper hygiene, and poverty (Sida 2021a, Aidara & Mateo 2020). WSSCC (SHF), in collaboration with UN Women, started working with MHM in the central and west part of Africa 10 years ago. The aim was to develop effective and context-based training programs based on a graph of training, research, and policy for critical elements for the fulfilment of women and girls' human rights during menstruation, made by the WSSCC 2016 (Aidara & Gassama Mbaye 2020). The building blocks of the programs was policy-relevant research, capacity and system strengthening and inter-sectoral collaborations (Ibid.). For this applied research, a good example of action and policy making was the Minister of water and sanitation of Senegal, who acknowledged menstruation as a fundamental and significant challenge in 2014 (Ibid.).

Global Menstrual Collective (GMC) includes representatives from UN organizations, the academia, government, funders, private sector, existing coalitions, advocacy groups, youth-focused organizations, religious groups, independent consultants, and international non-governmental organizations (WSSCC & UNOPS 2021). The members of the collective are working within different sectors including WASH, education, SRHR and equal rights to enable better education, health, livelihood, and economic opportunities to all menstruators globally. The GMC values menstruation as fundamental for sustainability, and claims that increased investments in access to information, education, and opportunities to

make your own individual choices is a human right for every menstruator, and is particularly important in terms of achieving the SDGs (GMC 2021). A universal definition of menstrual health (in collaboration with WHO among others), has been desired to establish better menstrual health. Developed from the GMC, the official definition was launched in April 2021³. Today, the universal language is quite divided and there are many conceptual differences. The experts for MHH agree to that the definition must include the whole menstrual cycle, and this newly launched definition will hopefully be able to provide better evidence of what is working and not.

The Menstrual Health HUB is a network that broadens the cooperation and opportunities to address menstrual health globally. Organisations, governmental institutions, and stakeholders can register to share knowledge and experiences through the HUB. Sida supports several of the registered organisations, thereby Sweden is a participant of the HUB.

Figure 1: The Menstrual Health HUB Global Registry of researchers, programs and contributions



Figure 1 illustrates the global registry of stakeholders, organisations and governmental institutions working, advocating, and researching on menstrual health in different sectors and on different levels. The HUB has an international common vision of uniting forces and building bridges over sectors and arenas, and to be seen in the global registry, the initiatives are numerous and widespread over all continents.

³ Menstrual Health: A Definition for Policy, Practice, and Research. Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26410397.2021.1911618>

4.3 Are there any differences or similarities to be seen in contributions for MHH, and in how menstruation is addressed?

In contributions for humanitarian needs, for example in climate catastrophes or warzones, the interventions are targeting MHH through the WASH-sector. When menstruation is targeted in development cooperation, it's not so often the main target, rather a sub-goal. Hence, in HUM-interventions, the contributions target menstruators in need of sanitary products or safe spaces to manage their period, and in development cooperation, contributions have a wider approach and are often sub targets within other activities or strategies.

The mapping shows that the civil society plays a key role in addressing menstruation in Swedish development cooperation. In 22 countries, globally distributed, there are actors and programs specifically funded to address menstruation as question for sustainable development and cooperation. Actors in different countries target menstruation differently, depending on context, e.g. economic conditions. Still, the ambition to prioritize menstruation within interventions and programs are similar because more and more actors observe MHH as a question for sustainable development and development cooperation. it exists disagreements about the right approach for change. In dialogues with stakeholders, it emerged that there are divided opinions in how and where the change should take place, for MHH to be addressed in development cooperation. If global networks and decisionmakers/governments should set the agenda, which then civil society should work from, or should the approach rather be that the state and global actors meet the civil society and their agenda and needs, and start from there.

4.4 Is there any significant difference over time regarding contributions and policies for MHH during the period of 2000–2021?

The meaning of menstruation has changed over the last 20 years, and from being a subject of silence and taboo, a women's issue to keep a secret, it has gained its own value in the gender equality movement. This change of meaning manifests how biological functions and social structures interconnects at an obscure level, and at the same time state an explicit matter within several development- and humanitarian aid-sectors. For Sweden, gender equality and SRHR are two main priorities for development cooperation and addressed in several regional and global strategies and policies⁴. Sweden is a key donor for organisations initiating contributions for MHH on a global, regional, and local level. In the studied policy documents (Appendix 2), equality and SRHR has always been prioritized, but it's possible to see change over time. The reading of the results assesses a significant change over time regarding how MHH as concept has been highlighted, and in what contexts. MHH is to be seen both theoretically in policy and practically in humanitarian interventions in Swedish development cooperation. Earlier, menstruation was targeted as menstrual hygiene management (MHM), today, stakeholders and activists are trying to reframe the concept to menstrual health and hygiene (MHH), as the representative term for the whole content. Stakeholders and actors working with menstruation believe that the term MHH reaches out beyond the WASH-sector and encompasses the broader partnership with other sectors such as the SRHR-sector for example. For researchers and stakeholders, there is even an ambition to instead refer to 'menstrual health' as the general concept. This is also verified in the official definition of menstrual health (Hennegan et al. 2021), that hygiene is no longer necessary for addressing menstruation. In dialogues with stakeholders in this mapping, several respondents agreed to that menstrual health is an encompassing term that includes both hygiene management as well as the broader systemic factors that link menstruation with health.

In my data, the first evaluated contributions targeting menstruation were within the WASH and reproductive health sectors to access sanitary

⁴ Sida's regional and global strategies (25–28) and Sweden's feminist foreign policy Government Communication. 2019/20:17.

products and to ensure good health globally. Today, the contributions are rather within the gender equality-sector, targeting labour rights, the right to school attendance during menstruation, and the involvement of men and boys in the movement. Menstruation has both repositioned itself from the health-agenda (the biological perspective of menstruation), towards the gender equality-agenda (the rights perspective) and broadening up the subject including more perspectives. Today, MHH is not only a question for reproductive health and right to water and sanitation. The question is broader today due to several interventions, both on the grass root level, and on national governmental level. Menstruation is not “a women’s issue” to the same extent, actors and stakeholders agrees on approaching the subject as question for all citizens to accomplish equality, human rights and sustainability.

4.5 Potential obstacles working with menstruation in development cooperation?

Potential obstacles for stakeholders and partner organisations working with MHH could be interpreted as insufficient policy frameworks and strategies in terms of what has been found in the mapping. Menstrual health is explicitly mentioned two times in the studied policy documents. In dialogue with stakeholders, the results have reconnaissance in terms of prominent resistance when MHH is narrated within the SRHR-sector. Some stakeholders agree to that MHH creates easy access to the SRHR-debate, and to bodily rights in general, while other stakeholders’ state that menstruation is still a subject associated with stigma because it opens for sexuality, femineity, and several more stigmatized attributes.

4.5.1 An example from Swedish development cooperation – Zimbabwe

Visibility of menstruation on the national agenda continues to evolve in Zimbabwe, even though it would be safe to say that there is still limited government engagement in menstrual health issues. In 2019, despite any eventual resistance, the Zimbabwean government abolished import duties on sanitary products, with the goal to improve supply of sanitary products at competitive prices. According to the Embassy in Harare, there are however potential obstacles. For example, scarcities related to the Covid-

19 pandemic and unaffordable (though available) sanitary products. In addition, menstruators have challenges accessing water, soap, underwear, and menstrual pain killers in urban and rural areas. To connect MHH to SRHR is one example of difficulties in addressing menstruation in development cooperation. Some of the difficulties or obstacles in working with MHH-programs and projects, especially during the Covid-19 era, is the inability to reach larger groups, the need to rely on virtual platforms and travel restrictions. Furthermore, police presence is making it difficult to reach girls in the rural communities. In general, the socio-cultural beliefs about menstruation as subject for taboo, issues around virginity and insertable menstrual products make it difficult to address MHH on the grassroot level.

5 Discussion

5.1 What conclusions could be drawn from the results?

A universal definition of menstrual health is desirable

It is referred to as an issue, a concept and as a biological challenge for women. While the conceptualisation of menstruation varies within and across sectors, menstruation is commonly defined as a subject for WASH and SRHR. Generally, there are strategies and priorities that are central in several of the documents, but menstruation is not addressed only by itself to a large extent. Does this effect the general understanding of MHH for development cooperation and its importance, or is it more effective to address the subject more generally? Hence, a comprehensive universal definition of 'menstrual health' is desirable to apply menstruation as a particularly significant issue for future development cooperation. For example, "increased empowerment for women" is one priority that peaks the reading of the documents, also "to improve the access to clean water and sanitation for everyone". These two examples of prioritised strategies in the Swedish public policy is generally directed to girls and women as target groups. This could be related to menstruation, and it could also not be related. One reasonable interpretation is that menstruation is an implied condition instead of explicitly written down on paper. Could this be because of the lack of a universal definition of the subject, or is it rather a question of power structures?

In relation to a universal definition, a coherent and accessible language regarding menstruation could facilitate implementation of future contributions and to disband the stigma. Strategic partner organisations to Sida in Swedish development cooperation operates towards a common goal of good and accessible sexual education for people around the world. Educating about sexuality, identity, hormones, fertility and menstruation for menstruators and others are vital to change attitudes, harmful social norms and to disband other oppressive structures. The lack of a coherent language for describing genitals, sexuality and the menstrual cycle is problematic both regarding your own understanding of your body, and in terms of power balances, and could also be seen in the contributions for

education. Several organisations are working preventively with an “changing attitudes”-approach towards both girls and boys.

Difficulties to reach target groups, and to advocate for menstruation having its own priority in development cooperation

In dialogue with stakeholders, due to stigma and taboo around menstruation, it's clear that there are difficulties to reach out to specific target groups. One interesting result is that menstruation is a question that stakeholders and actors perceive as important, but it seems to be mostly in a long-term perspective, in priorities for interventions and investments. Hence, if the actor must choose in-between prioritized areas within development cooperation or humanitarian interventions, menstruation seems to be a subject that you consider very important, but not important enough to be given the highest priority.

The understanding of the number of efforts is limited by the difficulty to map out MHH-specific contributions

In the previous results, WaterAid and Plan stand out in terms of contributions for MHH. Menstruation could be read as prioritized in Swedish development cooperation each year during the last 20 years. Because of the core support to WaterAid and Plan from Sida, it's difficult to point out each contribution or activity to address menstrual health. This difficulty to map out contributions, could affect the general understanding of what is being done and to what extent.

Menstruation as a question in development cooperation should be addressed across sectors

Throughout the results from analysing the policy documents, menstruation is being implicitly addressed, hence directed through other words and meanings. However, this could be due to that the Swedish government does not desire to regulate and govern in detail. The list of the political thematic priorities shall not expand too much to include all the specifically important details. Rather, menstruation is integrated as a

thematic question for a broader agenda. The ambition is to keep it more general.

Menstruation is highlighted in the educational sector and in the health sector to a large extent, but is this the “most suitable” target groups or sectors to attract? The agenda for menstruation in development cooperation is wide, and entails several dimensions of gender equality, sustainability, and development. The embodiment of menstruation that has been in the spotlight is nowadays interacting with the practical agenda for sustainable development, and with the theoretical research-based agenda. Over the years, women’s health and rights has been prioritized in several sectors of Swedish development cooperation, and specifically the right to abortion due to unwanted pregnancies, gender-based violence and the prevention of sexual transmittable diseases such as HIV. It’s not only “a women’s issue” anymore. Rather, it’s a perspective for the labour market and its employers, for governments and their decisions, the civil society, for school leaders and their contributions in prioritizing sexuality and identity in educational frameworks, and for traditional, religious and cultural leaders and their adherents. Contributions and interventions should overlap sectors within the Sustainable development goals, such as Ending Poverty, Labour rights, Economic growth, Peace and security and Climate change.

A shift over time in investments for menstrual health in development cooperation

Organisations expanding or developing like the WSSCC becoming the SHFund (Sanitation and hygiene fund) in 2021 is one example of how menstrual health gains more attention today. In the previous mentioned report, Making the case for investing in menstrual health & hygiene (2021), looking at Sweden as one of the most prominent donors for menstrual health, the authors state that there is a shift in investments over time. The prioritized area of investment is menstrual health products like sanitary pads, and secondly investments in WASH. This is also prominent in the results, where Sweden have been investing more and more during the last years in MHH-related interventions. There are less investments in initiatives addressing social norms and policy. What is being submitted and what is not is meaningful in terms of future investments. There are certain contributions and interventions reoccurring in the results, but the next step should be to evaluate whether one course of action is better than the other. To achieve efficiency in funds for menstrual health, coordination is

needed to ensure that all perspectives of menstruation is being assessed. This is also linked to the result regarding disagreements about the right approach for change. These divided opinions should be discussed further, due to relevance for efficiency and cooperation in between actors and states. The desirable universal definition of MHH concerns the disagreements of approaching change and could facilitate the menstrual aspect to become more common in development cooperation.

Additional issues not explicitly addressed

Corruption risks in-between stakeholders working with MHH is not addressed in the reading but appeared in dialogues with stakeholders. There are reports of corruption along the supply chain, making it ever more difficult for menstruators to access sanitary products (FSG 2016). The correlation of water and gender is one aspect that has gained attention and refers to the complexity of services of water and sanitation. That men and women has different requisites, and what that means for the MHH-movement. The corruption-perspective in the MHH-debate often emerges in water and sanitation services (Bordia Das & Hatzfeldt 2017).

Menstrual pain, and interventions to facilitate accessibility for pain killers is generally not in the spotlight for MHH, and despite this, a main factor for school absence among menstruators. UNICEF priorities to develop capacity and institutional support within the health and education systems to deliver MHH information to girls and boys, and a recent study identified menstrual pain as the main driver of absence from school among young girls.

5.2 Further research

Menstruation has gained less attention in the SRHR-debate than for example abortion (menstrual regulation), child marriage or female mutilation. Academic research addressing MHH is wide-ranging over disciplines, but mostly in the health and educational sector. MHH as one aspect of development cooperation is not frequently studied in academic research. To further investigate why a subject is being assigned more attention than another, it could be of interest to see to what extent menstruation or menstrual health and hygiene is being addressed in academic research? This could be done by a systematic review of the academic literature, and at the same time create a general view of how MHH is understood in the academic field.

Another possible area for further research is to study corruption risks in aid cooperation related to menstruation. Political interference in MHH-related projects, period poverty and menstrual pain have gained less attention in the MHH-debate. It would be interesting to investigate why certain subjects gain more attention than others in development cooperation and specific sectors. Could this be due to power-structures and social norms? Or is it still a matter of stigma and culture of silence, that certain subjects are addressed and others are not.

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Appendix 1. Interventions

In this table, all contributions, programs, and actors addressing menstruation is compiled and categorized.

Colour coding:

White = programs and projects collected from Sida's CSO data base.

Grey = programs and projects not declared for in Sida's CSO data base, collected from dialogues with the stakeholders.

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
Afghanistan	Swedish missionaries	WASH	2020–2022	5 163 059 SEK	Bilateral	X		Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (Wash) Intervention	Universal access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene among poor communities in Afghanistan.	In dialogue with stakeholder
Afghanistan	Swedish missionaries	WASH	2017–2019	3 745 709 SEK	Bilateral		X	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (Wash) Program	Female hygiene kit. Methods of self-care during menstrual periods practiced by participants. 80% of women report a changed behaviour	In dialogue with stakeholder

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
									during their menstrual period.	
Bangladesh	RFSU (The Swedish Association for sexuality Education)	Health education	2014	4 662 900 SEK	Bilateral		X	Addressing unmet need of SRHR for young people through creating awareness in the selected area of Khulna and Sylhet		Sida CSO database
Bangladesh	Swedish missionaries	Equality, health	2021–2023	5 702 215 SEK	Bilateral		X	Integrated Development Project 2021-2023	100% of women and girls are sharing their problems related to menstrual with the project's health workers.	In dialogue with stakeholder
Bangladesh	Swedish missionaries	Humanitarian assistance	2020	2 000 000 SEK	Bilateral		X	Multi-Sector Humanitarian Assistance to Cyclone affected population	Menstrual hygiene practice is negatively impacted, due to the destruction of WASH facilities.	In dialogue with stakeholder

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
Bangladesh	Swedish missionaries	Humanitarian assistance	2017–2018	1 500 000 SEK	Bilateral	X		Humanitarian Assistance to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh"	Tube wells, latrines and other WASH facilities will be maintained and repaired. Improved shelters and social spaces will provide meaningful activities for women and children in a safe environment.	In dialogue with stakeholder
Bangladesh	Swedish missionaries	Humanitarian assistance	2017	1 500 000 SEK	Bilateral	X		Humanitarian Assistance to Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh	Children under five years and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers are in dire need of food and proper nutrition. They urgently need shelter, food, nutrition, and water- sanitation, medicine, utensils and transportation facilities.	In dialogue with stakeholder

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
Burundi	Swedish missionaries	Basic health, humanitarian assistance	2020–2021	3 177 570 SEK	Bilateral		X	Life-saving food assistance, malaria prevention and protection	600 girls and 200 women receive reusable pads or menstrual cups. The objectives are: To reduce food insecurity, malaria-related deaths and ensure dignity in hygiene and sanitation for the most vulnerable people in Makamba, Muyinga, Kirundo, Cankuzo, Rumonge and Rutana provinces.	In dialogue with stakeholder
Democratic Republic of the Congo	UNICEF	Basic health	2018	50 000 000 USD (not included in calculation)	Multilateral	X		Democratic Republic of the Congo: Support to UNICEF Country Program in DRC		Sida CSO database

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
								2018–2019 (UNICEF)		
Guatemala	Plan International Sweden		2020	3 500 000 SEK	Sida Hum (RRM)		X		MHH Rapid Assessment, Distribution of MHH Kits and SRHR awareness raising in the response.	In dialogue with stakeholder
Kenya	Karolinska Institutet	Health, general	2018	1 200 000 SEK	Bilateral	X		Hormonal contraceptive use affects HIV susceptibility: determination of mechanisms and proposal for therapeutic intervention		Sida CSO database
Kenya	Karolinska Institutet	Population Policies/ Programmes & Reproductive Health	2016	930 000 USD	Bilateral	X		The influence of female sex hormones on genital viral shedding in		Sida CSO database

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
								Kenyan HIV infected women		
Kenya	Karolinska Institutet	Population Policies/ Programmes & Reproductive Health	2015	930 000 USD	Bilateral	X		The influence of female sex hormones on genital viral shedding in Kenyan HIV infected women		Sida CSO database
Kenya	Swedish missionaries	Equality, health	2021–2023	3 000 000 SEK	Bilateral		X	Mseto Resilience Project	Train children and pupils on Menstrual hygiene to break the silence and suppress stigma.	In dialogue with stakeholder
Kenya	Swedish missionaries	Equal health, equality	2020–2022	6 771 897 SEK	Bilateral		X	SEAL	10 000 girls accessing sanitary towels to attend and stay in school.	In dialogue with stakeholder
Malawi	Swedish missionaries	WASH	2019–2021	3 000 000 SEK	Bilateral		X	WASH Phase 2	Conduct sanitation and hygiene promotion campaigns, Facilitate	In dialogue with stakeholder

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
									construction of sanitation facilities in designated areas within Tas, Construct VIP toilets for both girls and boys in schools, Facilitate trainings on maintenance of sanitation facilities.	
Mozambique	Afrika-grupperna (Africa groups of Sweden)	Fighting sexual transmitting diseases including HIV / AIDS	2013	5 348 000 SEK	Bilateral		X	Community Forum – Othoko		Sida CSO database
India	CREA World	Equality, Health/SRHR and education	No info	No info	Bilateral		X	It's My Body (IMB)	Program, Sports Expressions Leadership and Freedom (SELF) Academy.	In dialogue with stakeholder

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
Namibia	ForumCiv & Wise Economy Global Association	Democratic participation & civil society	2018	429 000 SEK	Bilateral		X	My period is awesome!	(MPIA) is a platform for projects focusing on Menstrual Health & Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.	In dialogue with stakeholder
Namibia	ForumCiv & Wise Economy Global Association	Democratic participation & civil society	2019	1 004 000 mil. SEK	Bilateral		X	My period is awesome!	(MPIA) is a platform for projects focusing on Menstrual Health & Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.	In dialogue with stakeholder
Niger	Swedish missionaries	WASH, Health	2020–2022	2 967 678 SEK	Bilateral		X	Water Resources Management with improved Hygiene and Sanitation	Sensitization campaigns regarding menstrual hygiene in literacy classes and Tamou Secondary School.	In dialogue with stakeholder
Yemen	Swedish missionaries	WASH, Humanitarian assistance	2017–2018	5 817 701 SEK	Bilateral	X		Yemen Famine Intervention	Provide emergency WASH assistance to 3,600 of the most vulnerable households to	In dialogue with stakeholder

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
									reduce excess morbidity and mortality. (UN WASH Cluster, Objective 2)	
Regional south Africa	ForumCiv & Wise Economy Global Association	Democratic participation & civil society	2015	92 000 SEK	Bilateral		X	My period is awesome!	(MPIA) is a platform for projects focusing on Menstrual Health & Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.	In dialogue with stakeholder
South Africa	ForumCiv & Wise Economy Global Association	Democratic participation & civil society	2016	470 000 SEK	Bilateral		X	My period is awesome!	(MPIA) is a platform for projects focusing on Menstrual Health & Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.	In dialogue with stakeholder
South Africa	ForumCiv & Wise Economy Global Association	Democratic participation & civil society	2019	500 000 SEK	Bilateral		X	My period is awesome!	(MPIA) is a platform for projects focusing on Menstrual Health & Sexual and	In dialogue with stakeholder

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
									Reproductive Health and Rights.	
Syria	Swedish missionaries	Humanitarian assistance, Health	2020–2021	10 000 000 SEK	Bilateral		X	Sustainable Assistance For Eastern Syria (SAFE)	Currently, women and adolescent girls do not have enough water in eastern rural DeZ, leading them to stay at home during their menstrual cycle and children do not have enough access to water for cleaning.	In dialogue with stakeholder
South Sudan	Swedish missionaries	Humanitarian assistance	2020–2021	10 280 360 SEK	Bilateral		X	Integrated Multi-Sectoral Lifesaving Humanitarian Assistance	Goal: To save lives by providing timely and integrated multi-sectoral assistance aimed at reducing acute humanitarian needs for the most vulnerable people in Kapoeta East, Kapoeta North,	In dialogue with stakeholder

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
									Kassingor and Lainnya.	
South Sudan	Swedish missionaries	WASH, Humanitarian assistance	2019–2020	6 982 406 SEK	Bilateral	X		Life-saving and Sustainable WASH services integrated with Nutrition	Key focus hygiene and sanitation awareness and mobilisation, and integrated nutrition component in the WASH response.	In dialogue with stakeholder
Tanzania	ForumCiv, Unite 2 Learn, Our Kids in Africa	Demo. participation & civil society	2017	80 000 SEK	Bilateral		X	Inua dada		Sida CSO database
Tanzania	ForumCiv, Unite 2 Learn, Our Kids in Africa	Demo. participation & civil society	2020	270 000 SEK	Bilateral		X	Health for Girls		Sida CSO database
Tanzania	Plan International Sweden	Humanitarian intervention and SRHR Education	2017–2018 (12 months)	5 000 000 SEK	Sida Hum		X	Education support and protection to Burundian refugee children in Tanzania	MHH education integrated in youth clubs and in youth-led advocacy efforts in the camp.	In dialogue with stakeholder

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
Timor-Leste	Plan International Sweden	Gender Equality and SRHR Education	2019–2024	17 000 000 SEK	Sida Civsam		X	For a Dynamic and Gender Transformative Civil Society to promote SRHR and the Participation of Girls and Women in Timor-Leste	Champion of Change training to increase self-confidence of girls and young women to make healthy decision about their bodies that include MHH.	In dialogue with stakeholder
Liberia	ForumCiv Stockholm and regional ForumCiv-office	Gender Equality and SRHR Education	2019	17 740 SEK	Bilateral		X	Impact Girls	Enable participation in Menstrual hygiene day.	In dialogue with stakeholder
Liberia	ForumCiv Stockholm and regional ForumCiv-office	Gender Equality and SRHR Education	2020	250 000 SEK	Bilateral		X	The National HEFORSHE CRUSADERS of Liberia	Ensuring inclusion and Gender Equality through Menstrual Hygiene Management.	In dialogue with stakeholder
Uganda	Plan International Sweden	Reproductive Health	2014	2 414 469 SEK	Bilateral		X	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights		Sida CSO database

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
Uganda	Plan International Sweden	SRHR Education	2017	200 000 SEK	Sida CIVSAM (PAI)		X	Menstrual Hygiene Management Program: Scale up in Buyende, Eastern Uganda	Trainings and awareness sessions on MHH in schools, and in communities, construction of MHH supportive latrine blocks in 2 schools. (Scale up of bigger project funded by the Dutch office)	Sida CSO database
Uganda	Plan International Sweden	Reproductive Health and rights	2018	126 000 SEK	Sida CIVSAM (PAI)		X	Menstrual Hygiene Management: Developing peer to peer education materials, Uganda	Material development of a peer education manual on menstrual health and hygiene.	Sida CSO database
Uganda	Svenska Institutet, Wise Economy Global Association	Gender Equality, Reproductive Health	2019	1 000 000 SEK	Bilateral		X	Movement of #periodproud women and girls and #periodsupportive	Movement of #periodproud women and girls and #periodsupportive	In dialogue with stakeholder

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
								boys and men in Uganda	boys and men in Uganda.	
Uganda	Wise Economy Global Association (ForumCiv), The Wellbeing Foundation (TWF) in Kampala	Gender Equality, Reproductive Health	2019–2020		Bilateral		X	My Period Awesome (MPIA) – Uganda (No. 300008432)	#noperiodshame campaign, a global campaign initiated by My Period Is Awesome Sweden and Uganda	In dialogue with stakeholder
Uganda	Swedish missionaries	Education, Reproductive Health	2017–2019	2 125 425 SEK	Bilateral		X	Social and Economic barriers elimination project	"Training of Teachers ,Mothers and Pupils on Reusable Menstrual Pads in schools: This is a one-day training which will be facilitated by IAS staff since it is cheaper than hiring other trainers".	In dialogue with stakeholder

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
Uganda	Swedish missionaries	WASH, Basic health, Humanitarian assistance	2017–2018	3 922 984 SEK	Bilateral	X		Improving the coping mechanism of refugees from South Sudan	Enhanced resilience and increased access to safe water supply and reduced exposure to poor hygiene and sanitation related diseases among refugees and host communities that live peacefully together in and in the surroundings of Rhino Camp.	In dialogue with stakeholder
Uganda	Swedish missionaries	WASH, Basic health, Humanitarian assistance	2018–2019	1 445 845 SEK	Bilateral	X		DRC Refugee Life Saving Project	WASH intervention to reduce the critical need for collecting and storing household level safe water, engaging volunteers to raise awareness of refugees and host community for	In dialogue with stakeholder

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
									increased hygiene and sanitation, reducing the risks of disease and infections.	
Uganda	Swedish missionaries	WASH, Basic health, Humanitarian assistance	2019–2020	4 185 000 SEK	Bilateral	X		Life-saving and improved quality of life of South Sudanese, Congolese refugees	WASH services, with psycho-social support and youth empowerment for enhanced resilience being critical components of the response.	In dialogue with stakeholder
Uganda	Swedish missionaries	WASH, Basic health, Humanitarian assistance	2018–2019	5 050 536 SEK	Bilateral	X		South Sudan Refugee Major Humanitarian Intervention Uganda	Additionally, 10,000 indirect beneficiaries will be reached through WASH, environmental protection, livelihood, and food security activities.	In dialogue with stakeholder

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
Zimbabwe	Swedish Embassy and UNICEF	Gender Equality, Education	2016–2021	60 000 000 SEK	Multilateral		X	Health Development Fund 2016-2021, The Swedish support to the SRHR component	Investigate and understand challenges faced by in and out of schoolgirls during menstruation. Understand socio-economic, cultural, and religious norms and practices around menstruation. Unpack the drivers of social taboos and stigma surrounding MHH in Zimbabwe.	In dialogue with embassy
Zimbabwe	Swedish Embassy and PSI	Gender Equality, SRHR Education & Reproductive Health	2018–2021	63 511 000 SEK – planned 20 million one-year extension	Bilateral		X	Ensuring Access to Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights for All in Zimbabwe	Training of AGYW on menstrual health and link to Sexual Reproductive Health Distribution of menstrual cup to vulnerable	In dialogue with embassy

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
									Adolescent Girls and Young Women. National mass media campaigns (electronic, social, digital) to stimulate community dialogue and address stigma around MHH.	
Zimbabwe	Swedish Embassy and PSZ (Marie Stopes)	Gender Equality, SRHR Education & Reproductive Health	2018–2021	77 220 000 SEK – planned 20 million one-year extension	Bilateral		X	Marie Stopes International (Population Services Zimbabwe)	Training of AGYW on menstrual health and link to Sexual Reproductive Health Distribution of sanitary ware to vulnerable Adolescent Girls and Young Women.	In dialogue with embassy
Zimbabwe	Swedish Embassy and Plan International	Gender Equality and SRHR Education	2018–2021	55 184 000 SEK	Bilateral		X	Promoting Access to Inclusive Sexual Reproductive Health and Sexual Gender Based	Distribution of sanitary products to Adolescent Girls and Young Women between the ages of	In dialogue with embassy

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
								Violence Information and Services in Zimbabwe	10 to 20 years. Training learners and teachers on MHH Training AGYW on the production of reusable pads. Procurement and distribution of MHH kits.	
Zimbabwe	Swedish Embassy and My Age Zimbabwe	Gender Equality and SRHR Education & Reproductive Health	Ongoing	No info	Bilateral		X		Raise awareness on MHH focusing on menstrual related stigma. Advocacy activities to influence policy-MHM and Education policy advocacy. Education Act in 2020. Currently working with Ministry of Primary and Secondary education to ensure that Ministry of	In dialogue with embassy

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
									finance avails funds allocated for procurement of sanitary products to be distributed in schools.	
Zimbabwe	Swedish Embassy and Sanitary AID Zimbabwe	Gender Equality and SRHR Education	Ongoing	No info	Bilateral		X		Dissemination of menstrual information and distributing sanitary products.	In dialogue with embassy
Zimbabwe	Swedish Embassy and Cycle Health Zimbabwe	Gender Equality and SRHR Education	Ongoing	No info	Bilateral		X		MHM education with Adolescent Girls and Young Women giving special focus to girls with special needs. Menstrual Health training workshops for service providers i.e., Nurses, peer educators, caregivers, and	In dialogue with embassy

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
									guardians training. Pads (both disposable and reusable pads) distribution in communities, displaced populations. Training on how to make reusable pads.	
Zimbabwe	SAYWHAT Youths Action for Choice 2018–2021	Gender Equality and SRHR Education	2018–2021	17 162 000 SEK poss. for ext.	Bilateral		X	SAYWHAT Youths Action for Choice		In dialogue with stakeholder
Vietnam	Plan International Sweden	SRHR Education & Sanitation	2021–2022	3 500 000 SEK	Sida HUM / RRM		X		MHH kits with sanitation pads and “female hygiene liquid”.	In dialogue with stakeholder

Unspecified support ("core support") from Sida, from Open aid with search words; menstrua, value, norm

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
Unspecified	WSSCC	Water Supply & Sanitation	2018	ODA grants	Bilateral	X		Water Supply Sanitation Collab Council 2016–2020 (2018 onwards)		Sida CSO database
Unspecified	WSSCC	Water Supply & Sanitation	2018	ODA grants	Bilateral	X		WSSCC-Water Supply Sanit Collab Council 2016–2020 (New strategy 2018-2022)		Sida CSO database
Unspecified	WSSCC	Water Supply & Sanitation	2017	ODA grants	Bilateral	X		WSSCC-Water Supply Sanit Collab Council 2016–2019		Sida CSO database
Unspecified	WSSCC	Water Supply & Sanitation	2016	ODA grants	Bilateral	X		WSSCC-Water Supply Sanit Collab Council 2016–2019		Sida CSO database

Unspecified support ("core support") from Sida, from Open aid with search words; menstrua, value, norm

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
Unspecified	(Other, Ruby Cup)	Basic Health care	2015	ODA grants	Bilateral		X	L2-104 MAKIT ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT - IAP L2-104		Sida CSO database
Unspecified	Other	Basic Health care	2015	ODA grants	Bilateral		X	L5-96 BANAPADS LIMITED ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT		Sida CSO database
Unspecified	Other	Basic Health	2014	ODA grants	Bilateral		X	L5-96 BanaPads Limited entrepreneurial support		Sida CSO database
Unspecified	Donor country-based NGO	Population Policies/ Programmes & Re-productive Health	2014	ODA grants	Bilateral		X	RHSTEP cont SRHR		Sida CSO database

Unspecified support ("core support") from Sida, from Open aid with search words; menstrua, value, norm

Country	Organisation	Sector	Year	Disbursed amount	Bilat/multi	Menstru. is mentioned	Menstru. is explicit target	Program title, project title	Project/program short description	Source of information
Unspecified	Union to union	Labour rights	Ongoing	No info	Bilateral	X		Industri All's project in Asia: Menstrual leave		In dialogue with stakeholder

Appendix 2. Policies and guidelines

In this table, it's presented to what extent menstruation is addressed in Sweden's national policies and guidelines for international development cooperation and aid during the time of 2000-2020. Key words when searching in the documents: menstruation, menstrual, hygiene, sanitet, sanitary, period.

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies					
Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as "menstruation-related"?
Policyramverk för svenskt utvecklingssamarbete och humanitärt bistånd Skr. 2016/17:60	Policy framework	HUM-intervention, development cooperation	https://www.regeringen.se/4af25d/contentassets/daadbf4abc9410493522499c18a4995/policyramverk-for-svenskt-utvecklingssamarbete-och-humanitart-bistand.pdf	X	5.7 Jämlik hälsa (s.37) "... Kvinnors och ungdomars behov av hälsovård kopplad till SRHR, menshygien och förlossningsvård behöver lyftas fram, liksom respekt för hbtq-personers rättigheter..."
Sweden's feminist foreign policy Skr. 2019/20:17	Policy framework	Equality	https://www.regeringen.se/4a732d/contentassets/8db3c4560ab0466faf82edaa1c209fe0/swedens-feminist-foreign-policy-skr-20192017.pdf	X	En viktig del av arbetet med SRHR är tillgång till Wash inom bland annat hälsovården men även andra sektorer. Var tredje flicka i världen har inte tillgång till rent vatten och skolor är ofta inte anpassade till skötsel av menshygien , vilket leder till att många flickor slutar skolan. Ur ett globalt perspektiv är Wash i skolor

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
					fortsatt underförsörjt. Sverige arbetar för att förbättra flickors tillgång till toaletter och rent vatten samt för att genom informations- och utbildningsinsatser förändra stigma och attityder kring unga kvinnors <i>menstruation</i> .
Makt, mål och myndighet – feministisk politik för en jämställd framtid, Skr. 2016/17:10	Policy	Equality	https://www.regeringen.se/4ace09/globalassets/regeringen/dokument/socialdepartementet/jamstalldhet/makt-mal-och-myndighet--feministisk-politik-forett-jamstallt-samhalle-skr.-2016-17-10.pdf		Nothing of relevance for this mapping.
Utrikesförvaltningens handlingsplanför feministisk utrikespolitik 2019–2022 med inriktning och åtgärder för år 2021	Action plan	Gender equality	https://www.regeringen.se/491ecf/globalassets/regeringen/lena-micko-test/utrikesforvaltningens-handlingsplan-for-feministisk-utrikespolitik-2019-2022-med-inriktning-		(p.6) Att utveckla hållbara och klimattåliga vatten- och sanitetsprogram som både stärker motståndskraft och minskar klimatförändringarnas negativa påverkan på kvinnors och flickors åtnjutande av mänskliga rättigheter såsom deras tillgång till vatten och sanitet.

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
			och-atgarder-for-ar-2021.pdf		
Handlingsplan för politisk inriktning Strategi 2022	Action plan		http://klaranatet/globalassets/utrikesdepartementet/arbetsatt/verksamhetsplanering/verksamhetsplanering-ud/handlingsplan-for-politisk-inriktning.pdf		Identifiera de mest centrala insatserna och de allianser vi vill bygga för att förbli ledande och fortsätta att stärka och utveckla de globala hälsofrågorna, med särskilt fokus på flickors och kvinnors sexuella- och reproduktiva hälsa och rättigheter (SRHR).
Utrikesdepartementets handlingsplan för genomförande av Politiken för Global utveckling (PGU) 2016 prop. 2002/2003:122	Action plan		http://www.regeringen.se/4aca90/contentassets/2c0080676c2b4085a30514ca67bcac2b/udshandlingsplan-for-genomforandet-av-pgu.pdf		Nothing of relevance for this mapping.
Nationell handlingsplan för genomförande av FN:s säkerhetsråds-resolutioner om	Action plan	Peace & security	http://www.regeringen.se/49ef7e/contentassets/ead33c0dd10e47b1b614c413e756fac1/sverigesnationella-handlingsplan-for-genomforande-av-fns-sakerhetsradsresolutioner-		4.3 Stärka kvinnors och flickors fysiska integritet och motverka alla former av våld, tvång och kränkningar av kvinnors och flickors kroppar och integritet, samt stärka möjligheterna till sexuell och reproduktiv

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
kvinnor, fred och säkerhet 2016–2020			om-kvinnor-fred-och-sakerhet-20162020-.pdf		hälsa och rättigheter före, under och efter konflikt.
Strategi för hållbar fred 2017–2022	Strategy	Peace & security	http://www.regeringen.se/lamdochregionsstrategier/2017/08/strategi-hallbar-fred2017-2022/		Nothing of relevance for this mapping.
Strategi för Sveriges humanitära bistånd genom Styrelsen för internationellt utvecklingssamarbete (Sida) 2017–2020	Strategy	HUM-interventions	strategin-for-sveriges-humanitara-bistand-genom-sida-2017-2020.pdf (regeringen.se)		Nothing of relevance for this mapping.
Strategi för Sveriges globala utvecklingssamarbete inom hållbar	Strategy	Development cooperation, Economics	https://www.regeringen.se/49f09a/contentassets/9bfd61e4ebe24e838c136e0dda73c27d/ud2018-09125-iu-strategi-hallbar-ekonomisk-utveckling---bilaga.pdf		Nothing of relevance for this mapping.

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
ekonomisk utveckling 2018–2022 ⁵					
Strategi för Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete för global jämställdhet och kvinnors och flickors rättigheter 2018–2022	Strategy	Equality, human rights	https://www.regeringen.se/4aff43/contentassets/47d8446b9470407b9db08371123b14fd/strategi-for-sveriges-utvecklingssamarbete-for-global-jamstallldhet-och-kvinnors-och-flickorsrattigheter-20182022		Nothing of relevance for this mapping.
Strategi för Sveriges globala utvecklingssamarbete inom hållbar social utveckling 2018–2022	Strategy	Gender Equality	https://www.regeringen.se/4a54ba/contentassets/d53e143eb3e7442087a08a302f2ca8e0/strategi-for-sveriges-globala-utvecklings-samarbete-inom-hallbar-social-utveckling-2018-2022.pdf		Inom strategins två målområden, hälsa och utbildning, ska verksamhet med fokus på sexuell och reproduktiv hälsa och rättigheter (SRHR) samt vatten, sanitet och hygien (WASH) integreras. Dessa är särskilt viktiga och ömsesidigt förstärkande och möjliggör en bättre tillgång till både hälsa och utbildning för kvinnor och flickor.

⁵ (Bilaga till regeringsbeslut 2018-05-31 (UD2018/09125/IU))

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
Strategi för Sveriges utvecklings-samarbete avseende arbetet med de mänskliga rättigheterna, demokrati och rättsstatens principer 2018–2022	Strategy	Human rights, democracy, law	http://www.regeringen.se/land-och-regionsstrategier/2017/12/strategi-for-sveriges-utvecklings-samarbete-avseende-arbetet-med-de-manskliga-rattigheterna-demokrati-och-rattsstatens-principer-20182022/		(p.5) Stärkta förutsättningar för kvinnor och flickors fulla åtnjutande av de mänskliga rättigheterna, egenmakt och jämställdhet.
Strategi för kapacitetsutveckling, partnerskap och metoder som stöder Agenda 2030 för hållbar utveckling	Strategy	Development cooperation	https://www.regeringen.se/4a17d4/contentassets/ba9cd152d7d74eb4a496cd5dbb88b418/strategi_kapacitetsutveckling_webb.pdf		Nothing of relevance for this mapping.
Strategi för Sidas stöd till forsknings-samarbete 2015–2021	Strategy	Research cooperation	http://www.regeringen.se/land-och-regionsstrategier/2014/12/uf201480398udusty/		Nothing of relevance for this mapping.

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
Strategi för stöd genom svenska organisationer i det civila samhället 2016–2022	Strategy	Development cooperation	http://www.regeringen.se/r egeringsuppdrag/2016/0 6/strategi-for-stod-genom- svenska-organisationeri-det- civila-samhallet-2016-2022/		Nothing of relevance for this mapping.
Strategi för Sveriges samarbete med FN:s organisation för jämställdhet och kvinnors egenmakt (UN Women) 2018–2022	Strategy	Development cooperation Equality	https://www.regeringen.se/ 4a53cc/contentassets/ec1bc 26f33a84695a39fab044eeca 56a/rk_strategi_unwoman_s v_web_4.pdf		3.2.5 UN Women uppmärksammar kvinnors och flickors specifika humanitära behov och särskilda utsatthet under kriser, och verkar för att integrera ett tydligt jämställdhetsperspektiv i humanitära insatser i syfte att stärka kvinnors meningsfulla deltagande och inflytande, samt tillvarata kvinnors och flickors kunskap, kompetens och kapacitet i konflikt- och postkonfliktsituationer.
The Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2019–2022, including direction and measures for 2020	Strategy	Equality	https://www.government.se/ /4a7783/contentassets/66af d4cf15ee472ba40e3d43393 c843a/the-swedish-foreign- service-action-plan-for- feminist-foreign-policy-		The Foreign Service will promote SRHR for everyone by working to ensure reduced child and maternal mortality, and appropriate health care with access to trained staff and water, sanitation, and hygiene.

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
			20192022-including-direction-and-measures-for-2019.pdf		
Strategy for Sweden’s cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) 2016 - 2019	Strategy (multi)	Health	https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/66457497b8e435182874f0a03ddca86/who-strategi-2016-grafisk-service-19-jan.pdf		2.1 WHO has strengthened its capacity to support Member States in implementing and following up effective policies and interventions that promote and meet the needs of girls, boys, women and men in terms of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).
Strategi för Sveriges samarbete med FN:s befolkningsfond (UNFPA) 2017–2021	Strategy (multi)	Health, SRHR	https://www.regeringen.se/4a7a79/contentassets/f54396552e054d5782549ffad32c2ba7/organisationsstrategi-for-sveriges-samarbete-med-undp-2017-2021.pdf		3.3 Tematiska prioriteringar UNFPA stärker sitt arbete med att inkludera män och pojkar för att förändra normer och attityder samt förebygga skadliga sedvänjor och könsrelaterat våld.
Strategi för Sveriges samarbete med FN:s utvecklingsprogram (UNDP), 2017–2021	Strategy (multi)	Health, SRHR	https://www.regeringen.se/4a7a79/contentassets/f54396552e054d5782549ffad32c2ba7/organisationsstrategi-for-sveriges-samarbete-med-undp-2017-2021.pdf		3. Inriktning/prioriteringar. UNDP:s arbete förväntas bidra till mer jämställda samhällen samt ökade rättigheter och egenmakt för kvinnor.

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
			for-sveriges-samarbete-med-undp-2017-2021.pdf		
Strategi för Sveriges samarbete med FN:s barnfond (Unicef) 2018–2022	Strategy (multi)	SRHR, WASH	https://www.regeringen.se/4a564e/contentassets/72241e41f0ec4419a769bce81fb622e8/strategi-for-sveriges-samarbete-med-fns-barnfond-unicef-20182022.pdf	X	3.2.2 Jämlik hälsa Unicef fortsatt arbetar med att säkra barns och kvinnors tillgång till bland annat verka för att främja vatten, sanitet och hygien (WASH), menshygien, i fred såväl konflikt. 3.2.4 Utbildning Unicef stärker arbetet med att öka antalet skolor med sanitets- och hygienfaciliteter för flickors behov.
Strategy for Sweden's cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2018–2022					
Resultatstrategi för globala insatser för socialt hållbar utveckling 2014–2017	Results-based strategy	Sustainable development	Microsoft Word - UF2014-32091-UD-MU Resultatstrategi globala insatser socialt hållbar utveckling 2014–2017 Bilaga (regeringen.se)		Ökad delaktighet, medvetenhet och ansvar bland pojkar och män i arbetet för jämställdhet, SRHR och hiv/aids. Ökad tillgång till och förbättrade förutsättningar för utbildning för flickor samt barn med funktionsnedsättning.

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
Strategi för Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete med Somalia 2018–2022	Country-specific strategy	Development cooperation	https://www.regeringen.se/4a7814/contentassets/f19f7dae2df0495699434d41a4d60f40/strategi-for-sveriges-utvecklingssamarbete-med-somalia-2018-2022-.pdf		Ökat deltagande och inflytande i demokratiska processer, framförallt av kvinnor och unga.
Resultatstrategi för Sveriges internationella bistånd till Zimbabwe 2017–2021	Country-specific strategy	Development cooperation	http://www.regeringen.se/land-och-regionsstrategier/2017/05/strategi-for-sveriges-utvecklingssamarbete-med-zimbabwe-2017-2021/		Nothing of relevance for this mapping.
Resultatstrategi för Sveriges internationella bistånd till Somalia 2013–2017	Country-specific strategy	Development cooperation	https://www.sida.se/globalassets/global/countriesand-regions/africa/somalia/resultatstrategi-forsveriges-internationella-bistandi-somalia-20132017.pdf		Nothing of relevance for this mapping.

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
Strategi för Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete med Kenya 2016–2020	Country-specific strategy	Development cooperation	https://www.regeringen.se/4924f2/contentassets/215649bd42ca405da1d8307e67af5e3d/strategi-for-sveriges-utvecklingssamarbete-med-kenya-2016-2020-samt-bemyndigande-att-inga-samarbetsavtal		Nothing of relevance for this mapping.
Strategi för Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete med Kenya 2021–2025	Country-specific strategy	Development cooperation	https://www.regeringen.se/48de88/contentassets/19c9fb9296404db89a05df2748c6fc33/strategi-for-kenya-2021-2025.pdf		Ökad jämställdhet, inklusive minskat könsrelaterat våld samt tillgång till och respekt för sexuell och reproduktiv hälsa och rättigheter (SRHR).
Strategi för Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete med Tanzania 2020–2024	Country-specific strategy	Development cooperation	https://www.regeringen.se/4a4e53/contentassets/76181268b19940f09b9e6c9f45882dcd/regeringsbeslut---strategi-for-sveriges-utvecklingssamarbete-med-tanzania-200213.pdf		Inkluderande och jämställd utbildning och livslångt lärande av god kvalitet, med särskilt fokus på flickor och unga mödrar.

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
Strategi för Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete med Uganda 2018–2023	Country-specific strategy	Development cooperation	https://www.regeringen.se/4a496c/contentassets/30f79c98f3e84a84b33a1d288dfac940/strategi-for-sveriges-utvecklingssamarbete-med-uganda-20182023.pdf		Ökad tillgång till och respekt för sexuell och reproduktiv hälsa och rättigheter.
Strategi för Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete med Malawi 2021–2025	Country-specific strategy	Development cooperation	https://www.regeringen.se/48e29c/contentassets/b8fb55ac2ee84441b8fa04690743e2c6/strategi-for-mali-2021-2025.pdf		Ökad jämställdhet inklusive tillgång till och respekt för sexuell och reproduktiv hälsa och rättigheter.
Strategi för selektivt samarbete med Indien januari 2009 – december 2013	Country-specific strategy	Development cooperation	https://www.regeringen.se/49b729/contentassets/75e5ba65c6a64ca28b7f775587be5777/strategi-for-selektivt-samarbete-med-indien-for-perioden-2009-2013		2. Djupt rotade strukturella problem i det indiska samhället marginaliserar de fattiga och i synnerhet flickor/kvinnor.
Strategi för sexuell och reproduktiv hälsa och rättigheter (SRHR) i	Regional strategy	SRHR	http://www.regeringen.se/land--och-regionsstrategier/2015/08/s		(p.3) Med fokus på kvinnors och barns hälsa och SRHR.

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
Afrika söder om Sahara 2015–2019			trategi-for-sexuell-och-reproduktiv-halsa/		Ökad tillgång till grundläggande integrerad hälsoervice för kvinnor och barn.
Fördjupad strategirapport för Strategi för sexuell och reproduktiv hälsa och rättigheter i Afrika söder om Sahara 2015–2021	Regional strategy report	SRHR	https://cdn.openaid.se/app/uploads/2020/09/28121356/Strategirapport-Regionalt-SRHR-200315.pdf		Nothing of relevance for this mapping.
Sveriges internationella politik för Sexuell och reproduktiv hälsa och rättigheter 2006	Communication	SRHR	https://www.regeringen.se/49c843/contentassets/4f3bb66cc7a64b6695a690f876830942/sveriges-internationella-politik-for-sexuell-och-reproduktiv-halsa		Även för att främja jämställdhet är det viktigt att fokusera på unga kvinnor och unga män så att de har möjlighet att tidigt ifrågasätta rådande normer, villkor och maktstrukturer som är kopplade till kön. Sverige driver att alla människor ska ha tillgång till reproduktiv hälsoervice.
Dialog för förändring: Ett material till stöd för policydialog om sexuell och	Communication	SRHR	https://www.regeringen.se/49c841/contentassets/0cf5aa6662ca42059b0c5a1f54a57ae4/dialog-for-forandring-studiematerial-om-sexuell-		Att investera i unga kvinnors hälsa och rättigheter är särskilt viktigt och kan ha stora effekter för fattigdomsbekämpning och utveckling.

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
reproduktiv hälsa och rättigheter 2010			och-reproduktiv-halsa-och-rattigheter		
Government communication on policy coherence for development 2010: Meeting Global Challenges Skr. 2009/10:129	Communication	Sustainable Development	https://www.regeringen.se/49b738/contentassets/40d1d072f06443b0a2b3ca25bf177d0d/att-mota-globala-utmaningar---skrivelse-om-samstammighet-for-utveckling-skr.-200910129		Nothing of relevance for this mapping.
Government Communication on Policy Coherence for Development 2012: The Global Challenge of Economic Exclusion Skr. 2011/12:167	Communication	Global economics	https://www.regeringen.se/49c843/contentassets/9b8a85e689114812a7bac37d9bc b4547/implementation-of-policy-coherence-for-development--focus-the-global-challenge-of-economic-exclusion		There is a growing international resistance to children and young persons' SRHR, to the access to sexual education and birth control, to the rights of LGBT persons and to women's rights to safe abortions. p.66.
Resultatskrivelse om utvecklings-samarbete och humanitärt bistånd genom	Communication	SRHR, Multilateral cooperation	https://www.regeringen.se/4952fa/contentassets/fb1009d3d6a84758ba6ca19aba2b75df/resultatskrivelse-om-		Sverige har använt dialoger och styrelseroller i FN och andra internationella forum för att stärka genomslaget för jämställdhet och

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
multilaterala organisationer Skr. 2017/18:188			utvecklingsamarbete-och-humanitart-bistand-genom-multilaterala-organisationer-skr-2017-18.188.pdf		kvinnors och flickors sexuella och reproduktiva rättigheter (SRHR). p.43.
Biståndets resultat – tema jämställdhet och kvinnors roll för utveckling Skr. 2010/11:167	Communication	Equality	https://data.riksdagen.se/fil/67221E7A-524A-43F2-93FB-E0FF861D439F		Nothing of relevance for this mapping
Politiken för global utveckling i genomförandet av Agenda 2030 Regeringens skrivelse 2017/18:146	Communication	Sustainable Development Goals	https://www.regeringen.se/4952fb/contentassets/7af580b7bee2454eb8ae3fd572525654/politiken-for-global-utveckling-i-genomforandet-av-agenda-2030-skr-2017-18.146.pdf		(p.25) Sverige har ett långsiktigt engagemang i utvecklingsarbetet för vatten, sanitet och hygien och är en av de största givarna i världen på området. Vårt arbete för förbättrad tillgång till vatten och sanitet är inte heller begränsat till den period som omfattas av denna skrivelse.
I skrivelsen redogör regeringen för sitt arbete med politiken för global utveckling i genomförandet av	Communication	Sustainable Development Goals	https://www.regeringen.se/49bbd2/contentassets/c233ad3e58d4434cb8188903ae4b9ed1/politiken-for-global-utveckling-i-genomforandet-		(p.9) Mål 6. Säkerställa tillgången till och en hållbar förvaltning av vatten och sanitet för alla. Sammanfattat handlar målet om att uppnå allmän och rättvis tillgång till säkert och ekonomiskt överkomligt dricksvatten för

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
Agenda 2030, Skr. 2015/16:182			av-agenda-2030-skr.-201516182.pdf		alla, liksom till sanitet och hygien med särskilt fokus på behoven hos kvinnor och flickor och människor i utsatta situationer.
Sweden’s work on global health – implementing the 2030 Agenda (2018) Complemental document to the Swedish action plan for the 2030 Agenda	Communi- cation	Health	https://www.government.se/4a783f/contentassets/dd593d842fa445d29bf000bf8d97ed3e/swedens-work-on-global-health--implementing-the-2030-agenda.pdf		Health equity, Highlighting the importance for health of access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene.
Regeringens proposition 2002/03:122 Gemensamt ansvar: Sveriges politik för global utveckling	Proposition	Sustainable Development	https://www.regeringen.se/49b734/contentassets/877bf84550a243cca631222e984d3d81/gemensamt-ansvar-sveriges-politik-for-global-utveckling		5.5.10 Som huvudansvariga för livsmedelsförsörjning och hushåll drabbas kvinnor hårt av brister i vattentillgång och sanitet, liksom av problem som jorderosion och skogsskövling. Ett jämställdhetsperspektiv gagnar både miljö och fattigdomsbekämpning.

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
Jämställdhet och icke-diskriminering, prop. 2008/09:1	Proposition	Equality	https://www.regeringen.se/49bb03/contentassets/47d8dc95d7d14406be40f2421d935e9f/utgiftsomrade-13-integration-och-jamstalldhet		5.4.2 En jämställdhetsdelegation för skolan kommer att inrättas med uppgift att analysera köns-skillnaderna i utbildningsresultat, utvärdera metoder för att bryta traditionella könsmonster, föreslå lämpliga insatser m.m. I satsningen ingår även fortbildning av lärare och annan skolpersonal om könsmonster, hederstraditioner samt sex- och samlevnads-undervisning.
From population issues to SRHR – Sweden’s global engagement in sexual and reproductive health and rights (2014)	Governmental publication	SRHR	https://www.regeringen.se/49c843/contentassets/a11343fe4adc40569fa4cedfb7d75f97/from-population-issues-to-srhr		Menstrual regulation (abortion).
Riktlinjer för strategier inom svenskt utvecklingsamarbete och humanitärt bistånd 2017. Bilaga	Strategic Guidelines	HUM-interventions development cooperation	https://www.regeringen.se/48febb/contentassets/e9f20f643f4c459596b1f8f69bf13c38/riktlinjer-for-strategier-inom-svenskt-		Nothing of relevance for this mapping.

Governmental policy documents, communication, and strategies

Document title	Type of governing document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is targeted	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
till regeringsbeslut 2017-12-21 (UD2017/21053/IU)			utvecklingsamarbete-och-humanitart-bistand.pdf		
Kvinnor, fred & säkerhet Första rapporten från Sveriges nationella handlingsplan för genomförande av FN:s säkerhetsrådsresolutioner om kvinnor, fred och säkerhet 2016–2020.	First report	Peace & security	forsta-rapporten-fran-sveriges-nationella-handlingsplan-for-genomforande-av-fns-sakerhetsradsresolutioner-om-kvinnor-fred-och-sakerhet-20162020 (regeringen.se)	X	(p.19 [22]) Kustbevakningen till att säkerställa att det fanns kvinnlig personal ombord under det som benämns ”Operation Triton” (där det förekom att migranter steg ombord) och hade säkerställt att det fanns separata toaletter för män och kvinnor. Dessutom fanns tillgång till sanitetsprodukter för kvinnor och flickor. Kustbevakningen har samtidigt lyft utmaningar kring arbetet för att uppnå könsbalans inom organisationen och i viss mån också i insatser.

Sida evaluations and briefs

Title	Type of document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is part of target	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
Swedish Support to the Menstrual Regulation Program of Bangladesh 2007	Sida Evaluation 07/39		https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/8b4958889a6c44b2a6acde9e50fe9bba/14224.pdf	X	
Menstrual Hygiene Management 2016	Breif		https://publikationer.sida.se/English/publications/142804/menstrual-hygiene-managementfeb-2016/	X	
Sida Gender tool box 2017	Tool box document	Gender equality in the education sector	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/8603ffb013ff4fb7a662c3f4f5d0cc5b/tool_gender_equality_education_sector_june-2017_c1.pdf	X	Prioritizing menstrual health management at school and community level.

Sida's annual reports 2000–2020

Title	Type of document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is part of target	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
Årsredovisning 2020	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/0ddf84f6b9f6455bbaa6a6929274c7ff/sida_arsredovisning_2020.pdf	X	Under året har 349 insatser i 79 länder bland annat bidragit till 14 lag eller policyändringar i 12 länder. Till exempel har en lag om minskad aborträtt stoppats i El Salvador och i Zimbabwe har moms på mensskydd tagits bort.
Årsredovisning 2019	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/c4703f2074db470787198b23e9f1f2c9/sida_arsredovisning_2019.pdf	X	(p.109) The embassy in Zimbabwe arranged a cooperation of several civil society organisations where the work resulted in a governmental decision for tax-free menstrual hygiene products. (s.114) Sida mentioned in their yearly report that menstrual hygiene needs to be addressed in several thematic areas in aid for sexual and reproductive health and rights education. In Bolivia, with help from UNICEF, Sida has developed a program for education in menstrual hygiene. The program aims to teach young people about menstrual hygiene in learning by playing.
Årsredovisning 2018	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/fdb55be55dab412d82d5bea5ed400	X	(p.94, 101) Lack of clean water and access to sanitation has been on the agenda for 2017/2018, and within this, menstruation has

Sida's annual reports 2000–2020

Title	Type of document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is part of target	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
			718/sida_arsredovisning_2018.pdf		been addressed as question for sustainability in terms of suffer limitations for girls and women. This subject has been in focus worldwide, and some of the WASH-programs that Sida is managing includes support that aims to increase the knowledge and access to menstrual products. Also, in Bolivia, over 10 000 girls and boys has been actively learning about menstruation in school, to generate awareness of menstrual health and hygiene, the stigma and to change social norms/attitudes to the better.
Årsredovisning 2017	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/8183d27648e64fb7bdc03b9aa993b556/sidas_arsredovisning_2017.pdf	X	(p.25) Results strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Bangladesh. It exists political signals that intend to decrease women's rights to abortion, called “menstrual regulation”. The previous years, Bangladesh has decreased the support for education in the field of women's bodily rights. This has affected the Swedish cooperation and possibility for influence in the governmental dialogues.

Sida's annual reports 2000–2020

Title	Type of document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is part of target	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
Årsredovisning 2016	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/6d3a7a34027a44c2946165e3528de58a/sidas_arsredovisning_2016.pdf	X	(p.94) Globally, Sweden has been collaborative with the World bank and their work with IDA, to generate a plan of action for the EU, for equality (GAPII), to create a strategy for equality for the global initiative for education, Global Partnership for Education (ILO), to address menstruation on the water and sanitation agenda (UNICEF and World Bank).
Årsredovisning 2015	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/b5508846cb3043b1a7ce1285d8f3bfb5/sida-arsredovisning-2015.pdf	X	(p.39) In collaboration with Save the children, Sida had a project to increase the dialogue between children and their parents about SRHR and sexuality, especially with their daughters.
Årsredovisning 2014	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/da1c36478cf84cbca9b5620d233f3ea1/15498.pdf		
Årsredovisning 2013	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/df0979378a9947f68702c62935ecab	X	(p.51) Swedish development cooperation with Mali 370 000 persons have gotten temporarily access to clean water and sanitation

Sida's annual reports 2000–2020

Title	Type of document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is part of target	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
			9b/sidas-229rsredovisning-2013_3740.pdf		
Årsredovisning 2012	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/42df3a85cc2842719317a81c2e9ccd83/15262.pdf	X	(p.122) Initiatives closely to civil society, flexibility, and innovation. In Kenya, a small project was supported for production and financing of menstrual cups. The pilot phase of the project has good results, and the project is granted larger support.
Årsredovisning 2011	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/42e8ae40a1cf481da1d6dcddfd054c2d/15098.pdf		
Årsredovisning 2010	Annual report	Development cooperation	No to be found		
Årsredovisning 2009	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/7f36dcbbfd4e4bb39a7d3448b92ff65c/sidas-229rsredovisning-2009_2862.pdf		

Sida's annual reports 2000–2020

Title	Type of document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is part of target	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
Årsredovisning 2008	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/716a07c6c22e4b6fbd0e0695a80af6ab/14858.pdf		
Årsredovisning 2007	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/5082359bd36f461ea1319b6ae03fb4a6/sidas-229rsredovisning-2007_3067.pdf		(p.23) Resultaten från hushållsundersökningen visar att indikatorerna för de sociala sektorerna har förbättrats särskilt vad gäller tillgång till vatten, utbildning och hälsa.
Årsredovisning 2006	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/3952a56eb4e643eb96a3da5df6a68644/sidas-229rsredovisning-2006_976.pdf		(p.53) Under året har samarbetet mellan utbildningsinsatser och insatser inom flera andra sektorer såsom vatten, hiv/aids och hygien ytterligare förstärkts.
Årsredovisning 2005	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/fc74fa0b49374ddcb6711e3aeafeb8a6/sidas-229rsredovisning-2005_978.pdf		

Sida's annual reports 2000–2020

Title	Type of document	Sector	Source	Menstruation is part of target	What is said about menstruation, or could be interpreted as “menstruation-related”?
Årsredovisning 2004	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/f0d1e9ae0f054b16bec3c9820e5c5116/14519.pdf		
Årsredovisning 2003	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/7ebd49dafe4b484e867756abbd9edb6/13897.pdf		(p.35) Flickors speciella behov och utsatthet för exempelvis sexuella övergrepp behöver bemötas i undervisningen så att flickor också kan fullgöra den undervisning de påbörjat.
Årsredovisning 2002	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/38574c01a2c6469a9d6d7a7c80314db6/12928.pdf		(p.48) I samarbete med Unicefs hygienutbildningsprogram i Guatemala, El Salvador och Honduras.
Årsredovisning 2001	Annual report	Development cooperation	https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/5ff7e0131d944ee28e0e9b74e0c610b0/sidas-229rsredovisning-2001_998.pdf		
Årsredovisning 2000	Annual report	Development cooperation	Not to be found		

Relevant policy documents from leading non-governmental stakeholders/actors in the Swedish aid assistance (Sida-funded agencies)

Organisation	Year	Title	Menstruation is targeted	Quotes from the policy documents addressing menstruation as goal
CONCORD Sverige	2018	VÄRLDEN I POLITIKEN En kartläggning av partiernas politik i internationella frågor	X	(p.17) Socialdemokraterna, Sverigedemokraterna, Centerpartiet, Miljöpartiet och Kristdemokraterna lyfter vikten av tillgång till rent vatten för att hindra mödradödlighet och infektioner vid menstruation.
CONCORD Sverige	2020	FEMINIST POLICIES FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE Highlighting key linkages between gender and climate	X	(p.40–41) How is access to water, sanitation and hygiene connected to resilience and gender equality? (with WaterAid, RFSU).
CONCORD Sverige	2020	Verksamhetsplan		(p.23) Jämställdhetsmål.
WaterAid Sweden	2019–2020	Annual report	X	WaterAid driver tillsammans med det internationella konsultbolaget NIRAS med finansiering från Sida, är ett internationellt utbildningsprogram (ITPSUWAS) för nyckelpersoner som arbetar på myndigheter och bolag i städer där tillgång till vatten, sanitet och hygien är ett problem. Programmet har ett särskilt fokus på att nå de mest utsatta grupperna (exempelvis kvinnor, personer med funktionsnedsättning och personer som lever i extrem fattigdom).

Relevant policy documents from leading non-governmental stakeholders/actors in the Swedish aid assistance (Sida-funded agencies)

Organisation	Year	Title	Menstruation is targeted	Quotes from the policy documents addressing menstruation as goal
WaterAid Sweden	2018–2019	Annual report	X	I augusti deltog representanter från WaterAid Sverige på konferenserna Dry Toilet Conference i Finland och World Water Week i Stockholm. På Dry Toilet Conference presenterade vi WaterAids arbete kring mens liksom de insatser vi gör kring sexuell och reproduktiv hälsa och rättigheter.
WaterAid Sweden	2017–2018	Annual report Årsberättelse	X	Inom ramen för den globala strategin.
WaterAid Sweden	2016–2017	Annual report Årsberättelse	X	WaterAids arbete är inriktat på att i samarbete med lokala partners förse världens fattigaste befolkning med tillgång till rent vatten, toaletter och hygien.
WaterAid Sweden	2015–2016	Annual report Strategical goals 2015–2020	X	Ett konkret sätt som WaterAid tar sig an de här frågorna på är arbetet med att bryta de kulturella och religiösa tabun som finns kring mens. Tabun, okunskap och brist på toaletter gör att många flickor stannar hemma från skolan de dagar de har mens. Utan möjlighet att sköta sin menshygien ökar också risken för infektioner.

Relevant policy documents from leading non-governmental stakeholders/actors in the Swedish aid assistance (Sida-funded agencies)

Organisation	Year	Title	Menstruation is targeted	Quotes from the policy documents addressing menstruation as goal
WaterAid Sweden	2014–2015	Annual report	X	Världstoalettedagen 2014 in cooperation with Sida for highlighting the menstrual taboo.
WaterAid Sweden	2013–2014	Annual report	X	Att utmana tabun och fördomar kring menstruation är nödvändigt för att flickor ska kunna leva säkra, hälsosamma och värdiga liv. Förra året genomförde vi menstruationshygienprogram i 14 av våra programländer.
WaterAid Sweden	2012–2013	Annual report	X	Eleverna engageras med hjälp av så kallade hygienklubbar som främjar handtvätt och lär till exempel flickor hur de bör hantera hygien när de får sin mens. Detta bidrar till att fler flickor stannar i skolan och får en utbildning.
Plan International Sweden	2020	Annual report and Impact report	X	Plan International distributes menstrual protection in schools, but school closures have led Plan International to develop new solutions instead, such as the distribution of menstrual protection at home.
Plan International Sweden	2019	Annual report and Impact report	X	Plan International Sveriges dokumentärfilm No Shame. Period lanseras 2019

Relevant policy documents from leading non-governmental stakeholders/actors in the Swedish aid assistance (Sida-funded agencies)

Organisation	Year	Title	Menstruation is targeted	Quotes from the policy documents addressing menstruation as goal
				https://plansverige.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/plan-international-sverige-rsredovisning-2018-2019.pdf
Plan International Sweden	2018	Annual report and Impact report	X	Under verksamhetsåret byggde Plan International Sverige låsbara, tjejevänliga toaletter i Uganda och undervisade lärare och elever i menshälsa och hygien för att förbättra kunskapen om mens, bryta negativa normer och sticka hål på myter. https://plansverige.org/arsberattelse/2018/effekt rapport-2018/ungas-sexuella-och-reproduktiva-halsa/
Plan International Sweden	2017	Annual report and Impact report	X	Orkan i Haiti och hungersnöd i östra Afrika – två stora insatser där Plan International satte också fokus på flickors särskilda behov i katastrofer, som mensskydd och skydd mot sexuella övergrepp. https://plansverige.org/arsberattelse/2017/arsredovisning/forvaltningsberattelse/
Plan International Sweden	2016	Annual report and Impact report	X	Plan International arbetar även med att informera om menstruation och att öka tillgången till bindor och andra hygienartiklar. Vi

Relevant policy documents from leading non-governmental stakeholders/actors in the Swedish aid assistance (Sida-funded agencies)

Organisation	Year	Title	Menstruation is targeted	Quotes from the policy documents addressing menstruation as goal
				ökar tillgången till separata toaletter i skolor så att flickor kan fortsätta gå i skolan och röra sig i samhället även när de har mens https://plansverige.org/dist/yearbook2016/assets/pdf/Effektrapport2016_29mars.pdf
Plan International Sweden	2014	Annual report and Impact report	X	Brist på vatten, låsbara toaletter https://plansverige.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/plan_effekt_2014.pdf
Plan International Sweden	2008	Annual report and Impact report		Svårigheter i samband med könsstympning
Save the children	2021–2025	GENDER AND GBV IN HUMANITARIAN FRAMEWORK	X	Increase girls' and women's meaningful participation and leadership: <i>Design and implement targeted interventions to strengthen girls' and women's access to menstrual hygiene management, education and sexual and reproductive health services.</i>

Appendix 3. Terms and concepts

The definition of **policy** in this study refers to a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or individual stakeholder. The content of a certain national strategy, guideline or goal that addresses menstruation as question for sustainable development. Policymaking involves both technical and political processes of articulating and matching actors' goals and means. Policies are thus actions which contain goals and the means to achieve them (Howlett & Cashore 2014). This means that there are certain difficulties in measuring to what extent menstruation is addressed in policies. Policy can be something abstract in a discourse, not only referring to physical document or reports.

Menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) encompass both menstrual hygiene management (MHM) and the broader systemic factors that link menstruation with health, well-being, gender equality, education, equity, empowerment, and rights. These systematic factors have been summarized by UNESCO as accurate and timely knowledge, available, safe, and affordable materials, informed and comfortable professionals, referral and access to health services, sanitation and washing facilities, positive social norms, safe and hygienic disposal and advocacy and policy (WSSCC 2020).

When **Menstrual hygiene management (MHM)** was highlighted in 2012, during the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme, one acknowledged the importance of access to clean water during menstruation, and lockable toilets to prevent diseases and to create safe spaces for women to maintain their own hygiene. Nowadays, MHM contains addressing both the factor of hygiene management and regarding the taboo and stigma that advocates menstruation (Sommer et al., 2015b).

Stigma is framed as something implicit that reproduces itself within a discourse, and a stigma affects social and political institutions by having control over a concept and its meaning (Outshoorn et al. 2015).

Period Poverty. Numerous of previous research and current contributions refers to a concept called period poverty. This concept problematizes how for example homeless women experience their menstruation period, how girls and women around the world who aren't able to buy sanitary products manage to take care of their health while menstruating, and also difficulties for women when the choice is between food for their children and sanitary pads for their personal hygiene (ex.

Vora 2020). The issue of period poverty is not generally an issue in low-income countries; hence the issue is present in many developed countries as well. In November 2020, Scotland became the first country in the world to allow free access to menstrual products such as tampons and pads. The products will be accessible in schools, universities and hospitals and other public facilities. The movement to end period poverty has been on the agenda since 2016 (CNN 2020, BBC 2020).

Menstrual equity is one part of the movement to eliminate tampon taxes in the U.S, which now have been a worldwide movement. Menstruation is addressed as a source of struggle both economic and social. The biggest issue tends to be how menstruation should be framed in advocacy and policy. The movement of “tampon tax” was initiated as a call for action when people realised that food, medicine and other supplies were deemed necessities of life, while sanitary products for menstruation (tampons) had “value-added” tax (Winkler 2020, Weiss-Wolf 2020).

Menstruator is the designation of a menstruating person, no matter of identity, gender, or sex. One important aspect in studying menstruation is not to consider it’s a women’s issue. One should rather see it as an issue for menstruators, which is a term frequently used in the discourse. Hence, menstruator is a person who menstruates who doesn’t necessarily have to be a woman.

“Menstrual leave”. The menstrual leave debate was initiated to problematize potential time off for menstruators who couldn’t work due to menstrual pain. The policy is considered both positive and negative for the menstruators in terms of stigma, secrecy, and potential extension of patriarchal structures in the workplace (Levitt & Barnack-Tavlaris 2020). It’s a policy that could bring negative effects for the menstruator in terms of their status in the workplace. Today, there is not much evidence of menstrual leave as a successful policy for menstruators, but the policy is adopted in many countries around the world such as China, Japan, Zambia, and Mexico (Ibid.). Hence, it exists controversies regarding menstrual leave, if menstruators benefit from it at work and has the potential for well-being or produce several unintended negative implications and reproduce stigma and sexist beliefs.