

# Integration of water and sanitation facilities programs for menstruation management: a focus on university planning and budgeting processes at Kyambogo University, Uganda

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## Abstract

This study investigated the integration of water and sanitation facilities' programs for menstruation management with a focus on university planning and budgeting processes at Kyambogo University. The study employed qualitative methods of data collection and analysis from students and members of the university's top management. Findings revealed that there is limited engagement of female and male students in the budgeting and planning of water and sanitation facilities for menstruation management by the estates department; more so, the generic budget does not adequately cover all the requirements for menstruation management by female students, and female students perceive water and sanitation facilities for menstruation management as generally available but inaccessible and unacceptable in various ways. Thus, the study generates knowledge about the status of water and sanitation facilities for menstruation management to enable female students to participate in academic activities in higher education institutions by recommending that the Directorate of Planning and Development at Kyambogo University should promote a participatory and gender-equity inclusive plan and budget that ensures that water and sanitation facilities for menstruation management become an integral aspect in

planning and budgeting processes of the estates department. The university should equitably improve the current status of water and sanitation facilities for menstruation management by providing specific water in toilet rooms including changing rooms, replacement of broken doors to provide privacy, and other required facilities to enhance effective menstruation management.

#### KEYWORDS

Kyambogo University, menstruation management, water and sanitation

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is a normal and common occurrence for women during their reproductive years, and it is accompanied by considerable physiological and mental changes (Dogoli et al., 2023). Women have experienced menstruation periods since before humans were completely evolved as a species (Zellner, 2014). In ancient history, little is documented about menstruation probably because most of the scribes were men who chose not to record information on menstruation management among women (Zellner, 2014). In the ancient era, menstruating women were associated with magic and sorcery, and people were scared of seeing menstrual blood even women themselves (Zellner, 2014). Menstruation was also considered shameful religiously, which forced most of the women to hide their periods, more so cramps were considered as a punishment to women for the sin of Eve in the account of the origin of sin in the bible (Zellner, 2014). In the ancient era, menstruation was also associated with curses, which made people think of it as a mystical thing to be feared for a long time (Dogoli et al., 2023). The negative perspective towards menstruating women made organizational institutions and educational institutions inclusive to be silent about issues concerning menstruation management Chrisler and Johnston-Robledo (2011). For instance, according to WHO (2022), menstrual health was not on the agenda of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Millennium Declaration nor was it explicitly stated in the Sustainable Development Goals targets for goals of health, gender, water, and sanitation.

The silence of educational institutions about issues concerning menstruation management has made them irresponsible to menstruation management by female students. Consequently, by the 20th century, girls in primary schools in developing countries could not attend school during menstruation due to a lack of clean and private toilet facilities for female students in these institutions (Tegegne & Sisay, 2014). In the same era, UNICEF (2016) also confirmed that about 1 in 10 female students in primary in Africa did not attend school during menstruation (Rose et al., 2022; Thomas & Charles, 2022).

Jasper et al. (2012) define sanitary facilities for menstruation management as necessities for women and girls to manage menstruation. These include private safe toilets, latrines, and the availability of toilet paper. Sanitary facilities also involve urinals; washing facilities for hands,

female students' menstruation management, various measures are required. There is a need for the estates and works department to carry out continuous supervision of the status, utilization, and access of water and sanitation facilities. This will help to improve the status of these facilities for proper students' health and participation in academic activities. This will also help female and male students to effectively use water and sanitation facilities at the university. Also, the university management and the estates department should increase their effort to maintain a constant supply of water to avoid shortage and inadequacy of water supply at the university. There is a need for the university management and the estates department to increase the budget for the provisioning and maintenance of water and sanitation facilities for menstruation management to concur with the increasing number of female students at Kyambogo University.

The Government of Uganda thru the National Council for Higher Education, NCHE should design strong governance and legal frameworks to uniformly enhance the appreciation by all higher education institutions by encouraging them to set up gender equitable facilities for menstrual and hygiene management. This can be emphasized even at planning level whole developing and setting up building structures, official students social center like guild parks, conferences halls, lecture, and laboratory facilities among other. This will bridge the access and usage gap in the area of water and sanitation facilities for menstruation management across all higher education institutions in Uganda and beyond.

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