



Ethiopia



## Integrating Sustainable Health and Educational Development with Menstrual Hygiene Management

Tiret Community Empowerment for Change Association (TCECA) 

TCECA has a comprehensive, school-focused approach to menstrual hygiene management education and WASH resource provision.

Launched in 2011, Hybrid (For-profit / Not-for-profit) , Menstrual Hygiene Management , Cross-sector , Cross-sector: Education , Women's Empowerment , East Africa: Ethiopia

Partners: Union of Ethiopian Women Charitable Associations (UEWCA), Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Association (CCRDA), WaterAid Ethiopia, Care Ethiopia, and SNV-Netherlands Development Organization.

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### Problem Addressed

A comprehensive approach to Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) is still neglected and not sufficiently addressed at the policy and program level in Ethiopia. Most rural school girls in Ethiopia do not attend school during their menstrual cycles because of the inadequate toilet facilities in schools, high cost of purchasing sanitary pads, taboos, and the fear of accidental leaks. The current practice is to use unhygienic rags which cause leakages and present a high risk of urinary tract infections. Due to possibility of leakages, the girls remain at home, missing 3-5 days of school each month. This results in the girls falling behind in school work and ultimately dropping out of school. By dropping out of school, the girls are unable to complete their education and unable to break out of poverty.

In addition, MHM is not also integrated with WASH and Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) teaching. Integrating Sustainable Health and Educational Development (SHED) with MHM programming has the potential to improve the health and educational achievement of rural girls.

### Innovative Approach

TCECA's program is innovative in that they have effectively helped to "break the silence" on menstrual hygiene management in communities where it is a taboo subject. Their ability to engage local communities in talking about this issue and in creating sustainable solutions, such as reusable menstrual pad micro-enterprises, has improved girls' school attendance and well being in the communities in which they work. They are also innovative in their use of leftover factory textiles to create an eco-friendly reusable menstrual pad.

### Program Solution

The Tiret Community Empowerment for Change Association (TCECA) has integrated sustainable health and educational development (SHED) in schools with a menstrual hygiene program in order create a health, education and school-friendly environment for rural adolescent girls. As a result of this, the personal health and school attendance of rural girls has

improved.

Similarly, TCECA has created employment opportunities for poor women and girls by engaging them in the production and sales of alternative reusable sanitary pads at the local level. They use leftover materials from garment and textile factories in Ethiopia. This program has led to a number of improved outcomes, including increased awareness on personal hygiene and MHM, improved access to school for young girls, and capacity building for women and girls to earn money by producing and selling alternative reusable and washable sanitary pads.

Please visit this program profile at:

<https://washinnovations.r4d.org/program/integrating-sustainable-health-and-educational-development-with-mhm>