



ZAMBIA ALLIANCE OF WOMEN ZAW
IN COLLABORATION WITH
INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN



Water and Pads Project – Activities 2024 at Chibwe School in Kabwe and Dzikomo School in Ndola, Zambia



1. Introduction

Zambia Alliance of Women (ZAW) has for the past 5 years worked with school girls in Zambia at Chibwe School in Kabwe and Dzikomo School in Ndola implementing the project Water and Pads for school girls (WP) in partnership with the International Alliance of Women. The goal is to dismantle all barriers which prevent girls from attending school during their menstrual cycle in Africa and Asia, of particular interest to IAW member organizations.

The 2024 WP activity was held on Friday 22nd March 2024 at Dzikomo School in Ndola where Edah Chimya, Ceasar Katebe and Musonda Chimya started by having a meeting with the Head Teacher of Dzikomo School, Mrs Chanda in the company of the teacher sMrs. Faides and K. Sinkonde. They informed us, that at the school a place for the correct disposal of used hygiene products was created. Also a meeting had been held about the participation of other NGO's on events regarding sexual and reproductive health. The school voiced its appreciation for the support given by IAW and ZAW. It was clear that the girls face challenges leading them to staying away from school during their menstrual periods. It is due to the lack of sufficient sanitary pads, because most students come from poor communities at Ndola. It was also noted that there is a need for menstrual hygiene and leadership lessons in addition to the sanitary pads being given for young girls undergoing menstruation. The conversation was then followed by the discussion with the girls.





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2. Engagement with the Girls

To kickstart the discussion our Executive Director Mrs Edah Chimya, introduced the ZAW team and expressed her gratitude on the school's collaboration with "The water and Pads project". She explained that the WP project was an initiative of International Alliance of Women, an organisation ZAW is affiliated. She went on and thanked the pupils and the members of the staff for agreeing to participate in the discussion.

During the visit, the team engaged in an informative session covering crucial topics related to menstrual health and hygiene. The focus went on beyond distributing menstrual hygiene products and booklets by fostering a deeper understanding of women's bodies and reproductive health.



The session started with Mrs Edah Chimya introducing the discussion on menstrual hygiene, underscoring its importance for personal well-being, the joy of being a girl, the importance of self love and self esteem. The team seized the opportunity to empower the young women thanks to their knowledge about their bodies. A supportive environment for open conversations about reproductive health was created. The head teacher joined the discussion. She begun by thanking the organisation for the support and led the girls into a jubilatant song.





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3. Girls overcoming Menstruation Stigma

Musonda Chimya, a Graduate Engineer from the Copperbelt University then took the girls through her journey of success: She was the only girl in her class, speaking about her dealing with discrimination and about her self esteem. She further highlighted the different types of menstrual products available, engaging in a dialogue on their various names, physical appearance and uses. The importance of responsible disposal of menstrual hygiene products was emphasized, coupled with a commitment to promoting environmental sustainability through proper waste management practices.



4. Destigmatizing Menstruation

As the discussions deepened, the team got involved into an in-depth conversation about menstruation and its societal impact. This comprehensive approach aimed not only to educate but also to destigmatize the topic, allowing young women to embrace their natural biological processes with confidence. The girls thanked IAW for the support and highlighted the challenges they face. Videos were shared on facebook with links provided in the report.

5. Pads and Books distribution





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6. Challenges

Community school girls face a myriad of challenges related to menstrual hygiene. These include:

- Inadequate sanitation facilities, leading to a lack of privacy and cleanliness, contributing to physical discomfort and emotional distress.
- The unavailability and unaffordability of menstrual hygiene products force many girls to resort to makeshift solutions, compromising their health and well-being.
- Limited awareness about menstrual health and stigma surrounding menstruation further hinder their ability to manage their periods with dignity.

7. Highlight

A noteworthy moment during the session similar to last year at Chibwe School, now at Dzikomo School in Ndola was the recognition of Menstrual Hygiene Day on the 28th day of the fifth month, symbolizing the average menstrual cycle and number of days of menstruation. This acknowledgment served as a reminder of the global significance of menstrual health and hygiene.



8. Closing Remarks

ZAW in their closing remarks assured the pupils of Dzikomo Secondary School that they will continue to advocate for the “The Water and Pads Project” by addressing the challenges the girls are facing.

9. Conclusion

The water and pads event at Dzikomo School on Friday 22nd March, 2024 brought to light the importance of menstrual support to girls related to their mental and physical health. Girls need support for loving and appreciating themselves and their value as being a girl. Poor girls end up quitting school for early marriages because of the need for validation and material support. Therefore the continuation of the WP project is critical for the empowerment of girls with knowledge, skills and sanitary support.

Report by Mrs. Edah Chimya, Executive Director of ZAW

APPENDIX

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-GKB2znFw-rcLSja3uVm7KtkDQ4Xrq-m>