



ZAMBIA ALLIANCE OF WOMEN (ZAW) TRAINING AND SUPPORT TO GIRLS AT DZIKOMO SCHOOL

1. INTRODUCTION

According to African Education Program (AEP) recent poll; 30% of girls in Zambia have been reported using rags or traditional methods during their periods.

It is not a myth that women and girls in rural areas and peri urban areas in Zambia lack access to menstrual hygiene management materials and necessary facilities to manage their menstrual health. The lack of access to menstrual hygiene products at school and at home is compounded by several factors ranging from little knowledge, wrong beliefs about menstruation, economic challenges faced by households, and lack of access to affordable, available, alternative sanitary pads, often resulting in what is known as period poverty.

According to the Royal College of Nursing, period poverty is the lack of access to sanitary products due to financial constraints. This can be caused by a wide range of life events that negatively impact on a girl or woman's ability to access sanitary products to manage a most intimate and regular natural occurrence in her life.

Period poverty has negative impacts on health, education, gender equality, and productivity as girls are forced to drop out of school.

Zambia Alliance of Women (ZAW) has for the past 4 years been implementing a Water and Pads project with support from its mother body the International Alliance of Women (IAW). This project has been implemented at Chibwe School in Kabwe but this year a new school was added to increase on its number of beneficiaries. Dzikomo School located in Itawa area of Ndola has been to increase the number of beneficiaries as its pupils come from nearby compounds that comprise of low-income families.

2. IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES

ZAW held training and engagement at Dzikomo School on 16th September 2022 where a group of more than 280 female pupils were brought together to an engagement on Menstrual hygiene, the joy of womanhood and sexual reproductive health. ZAW Executive Director Edah Chimya explained the objectives of the project highlighting that it was very important for girls to be kept in School every day of the month regardless of whether or not they were having monthly periods. She further informed the School administration and the girls on the processes that led into the inclusion of the School. The partners involved in the project and the nitty gritty of the project. the girls were led into discussions of the Joy of womanhood, self-esteem, they were given chance to speak to their experience and thereafter each pupil was given Pads and books titled “The ABC of being a girl and “Entering Womanhood. Others that spoke to inspire the girls from ZAW were Mr. Ceasar Katebe and Ms. Thresa Njavwa Bwalya

Present at the gathering were 4 Teachers namely Ms. Ritah Chilufya Mwansa (Senior Teacher), Ms. Faides Kaira Sinkonde, Ms Precious Musadabwe Shimatanga and Ms. Given Mkandawire Chilombo. The Senior teacher gave school background in relation to period poverty. She explained that they had a system of stocking emergency pads in their pad bank which was empty at the time of the meeting and the replenishment coupled by giving a packet to each girl couldn’t have come at a better time than then.

Three girls namely Zenja Mwangala, Chitalu Namwiinga Spiwe and Gladys Katongo gave vote of thanks on behalf of the other girls who received books and sanitary pads

Project Output I:

Goals: The goals of the water and pads project were in:

-dismantling

- all barriers which prevent girls from attending school during their menstrual cycle in the African, Asian and South American region, with special regard to IAW-member countries

-promoting

- provision of washable and reusable sanitary pads, if possible, produced in a local project,
- health education, particularly addressing the taboo aspects,
- self-confidence of girls about womanhood and the knowledge about equality of men and women,
- knowledge about the full sexual and reproductive health rights of girls in particular in rural areas,

alertness about the precarious situation at the local, national and international level.

3. EXCHANGE LEARNING MOMENTS

The discussion brought out different ways of disposing sanitary towels, brought out local solutions in pain relief, easy ways of making reusable sanitary pads, menstrual hygiene as well as general grooming.

4. CHALLENGES

Among the challenges highlighted, may be distinguished the fact that the school had other female pupils that were not present but needed to receive both pads and books, this reviewed the need for greater fundraising for this as it brought out smiles on the many girls. The need for more visits meant more money but posed a great challenge that needed to be accepted and solved.

5. PROJECT DEVIATIONS

There were no great deviations apart from the expansion of discussion scope as well as the inclusion of National TV to increase on the number to be reached.

6. LESSONS LEARNT

The success in the event brought out the need for more fundraising and the knowledge gaps and well as the local knowledge observed as the discussion went to local solutions.

7. CONCLUSION

The training and support at Dzikomo School was very impactful, brought fulfillment as well as reviewed the need to conduct more such events to put smiles on girls faces.

REPORT ANNEXES





