

Water and Pads for School-Girls –Empowerment for Life

Women Comfort Corner Foundation Zimbabwe Activity February 2020

Girls and boys from Epworth High School, Zimbabwe are telling about their experiences with Water and Pads Project



Tendai Marongwe and Chipo Phiri



Classence Petro

Tendai Marongwe & Chipo Phiri, girls Getting our dignity back

The girls were concerned about the mostly young girls attending high school for the first time. Although the times are changing it is generally taboo in most homes, especially in rural areas, to speak about the issues related to menstruation. The girls expressed gratitude to the International Alliance of Women for providing oral guidance reinforced by the booklets with informative details about menstruation. They also expressed concern about the use of unsanitary material, which obviously breeds a plethora of diseases. Generally, girls are shy to talk about infections which fester and lead to devastating consequences. The other concern is that not only the girls cannot afford a visit to the Doctor. Most people do not have access to medical aid.

Girls are inevitably disempowered due to the lack of sanitary wear. Most girls who cannot afford sanitary wear make painful decisions not to come to school as they fear to spoil their uniforms resulting in missing out on the school activities and important assignments, which may result in deterioration of the girls' school work. It is in that vein that they averred that the work done by Women's Comfort Corner Foundation in spreading International Alliance of Women's project is making a difference in the community.

The wish was that more should be done, for example a donation of pads to students doing first year at High School. They also decried the advent of Corona Virus which will limit the ongoing project of the International Alliance of Women. They also loved the booklet entitled "Entering Womanhood" which also made described biological features of the body and was very easy to understand, they also cascaded the information to people at home and other students who are neighbours. Doing plays and dancing for change is making a huge difference in the community.

Classence Petro, Deputy Head Boys Menstruation & Menstrual Hygiene Management

Sanitary pads are more important to girls' health because menstruation is a natural phenomenon. It is very essential for us as males to make sure that every girl is supplied with sanitary pads. Availability should be free to prevent the use of rugs infected bacteria which will result in

avoidable health complications. It is important for the boys to support girls as their school mates or siblings during the menstrual periods and assist by buying pads. The lack of water negatively impacts society as a whole. The desperation to stem the bleeding at times causes the girls to use newspapers. Little has been done to address this reproductive health issue, which has devastating consequence. I am proud to be selected by Women's Comfort Corner Foundation to further the objectives and the project of the International Alliance of Women.

We were looking forward to a gathering of high schools at our school to share experiences with other schools but the Corona Virus came up now. Despite the unforeseen setback, I was honoured to be chosen to lead the committee for changing attitudes towards the girls.