



## Table of contents.

1. Introduction .....	2
2. Opening Remarks .....	2
3. Different Types of Menstrual Products and their disposal .....	3
4. Destigmatizing Menstruation .....	3
5. Pads and Books distribution .....	4
5. Challenges .....	4
6. Highlight .....	4
7. Closing Remarks .....	5
8. Conclusion .....	5





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



## **1. Introduction**

Menstrual hygiene is a crucial aspect of women's health and well-being, playing a pivotal role in ensuring the dignity, comfort, and confidence of individuals during their menstrual cycles. Beyond the biological aspect, proper menstrual hygiene management is essential for preventing health complications and empowering women to lead active and fulfilling lives. In societies worldwide, breaking the silence surrounding menstruation and promoting awareness about hygienic practices not only fosters individual well-being but also contributes to dismantling age-old stigmas, advancing gender equality, and creating environments where every woman can navigate her menstrual journey with pride and confidence. Understanding and advocating for menstrual hygiene is not just a health imperative; it is a critical step towards fostering inclusive, informed, and empowered communities.

In the pursuit of women's empowerment, the Zambia Alliance of Women (ZAW) with partnership from International Alliance of Women (IAW) aims to address challenges faced by women and girls with menstrual health through **"The Water and Pads Project"**.

In a tangible manifestation of this commitment, a team of ZAW representatives, including Mrs. Edah Chimya, Miss Grace Kaputula, Miss Deborah Mchulu, Miss Lucy Nshimbi, and Mrs. Mwamba, embarked on a transformative visit to Chibwe Secondary School in Kabwe on the 15th of November, 2023. This outreach surpassed traditional policy advocacy, seeking to directly and positively impact the lives of young women.

## **2. Opening Remarks**

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 went further and thanked the pupils as well as the members of staff for agreeing to participate in the discussion.



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

The session commenced with Mrs Edah Chimya our executive director introducing the discussion on menstrual hygiene, underscoring its importance for personal well-being. The team seized the opportunity to empower young women with knowledge about their bodies, creating a supportive environment for open conversations about reproductive health.



### **3. Different Types of Menstrual Products and their disposal**

Moving forward, the team 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 delved 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.



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### **5. Pads and Books distribution**



### **6. Challenges**

In rural areas, secondary school girls face a myriad of challenges related to menstrual hygiene. These include:

- Inadequate sanitation facilities as they lack flushable toilets and still use pit latrines, 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 the stigma surrounding menstruation further hinder their ability to manage their periods with dignity.

### **7. Highlight**

A noteworthy moment during the session was the recognition of Menstrual Hygiene Day on the 28th day of the fifth month, symbolizing the average menstrual cycle. This acknowledgment served as a reminder of the global significance of menstrual health and hygiene.





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### **8. Closing Remarks**

ZAW in their closing remarks assured the pupils of Chibwe Secondary School that they will continue advocating for the “The Water and Pads Project” to address the challenges they are facing.

### **9. Conclusion**

Through direct engagement with educational institutions like Chibwe Day and Secondary School, ZAW exemplified its dedication to not only advocating for women's rights but actively fostering empowerment and education within communities.

The visit to the school showcased the impactful strides made by ZAW in partnership with the IAW, fostering positive change and creating a more equitable and empowered society. The stories shared, lessons learned, and connections forged during this visit undoubtedly contributed to the ongoing journey of empowering womanhood in Zambia and beyond.