

NO MORE LIMITS: ZONTA E-CLUB OF WEST AFRICA MARKS MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY 2019 AT KOTABAABI NO.13 SCHOOL IN MAMOBI, ACCRA-GHANA

In a recent series of Instagram posts aimed at busting menstruation myths, UNFPA mentioned that “Menstrual myths and taboos have existed and still exist in many cultures for a long time. Around the world and throughout history, misconceptions about menstruation have led to the exclusion of women and girls from all kinds of roles and settings - everything from leadership positions to space travel” (@UNFPA, 2019).

Every year, May 28 is celebrated globally as World Menstrual Hygiene Day, and to end period poverty, the stigma, silence and shame around menstruation, the Zonta e-Club of West Africa marked Menstrual Hygiene Day 2019, at Kotobaabi No.13 Junior High School in Mamobi, Accra, on Tuesday 28 May 2019. The event, which was organized in partnership with Fanthonio Foundation, a Ghanaian advocacy NGO, took place on the school premises in Mamobi to raise awareness. It was attended by over 100 students and staff as well as members of the two organizations. It consisted of a one-and-a half interactive session on menstruation matters and menstrual hygiene management, and in line with this year’s theme of ensuring access to menstrual products for all, ended with the distribution of sanitary products to all the school girls. The group, led by the President of Zonta e-Club of West Africa, Joyce Dzide-Tei, spoke to the girls in JHS 1, 2, and 3 about how to handle menstruation hygienically and with dignity. They also engaged the boys in conversations about how they can promote a more inclusive and supportive period positive environment for girls, and urged them not to see menstruation as dirty or shameful.

Addressing the school, President Joyce and her team emphasized the need for the world to recognize menstruation in particular and women’s rights in general as a human rights issue. She urged schools and communities to make a concerted effort in ensuring that sanitary products, water, soap, private spaces for changing materials, disposal facilities, and information about menstrual hygiene management are accessible to girls. She added that no girl should miss school because she cannot afford sanitary products during her period. She also used the opportunity to thank all the donors, partners, supporters, and members of the Zonta Club for their commitment towards gender equality and in ending period poverty to ensure girls stay in school. After the event, the girls could not hide their excitement and took turns to express their gratitude for the impact made in a very humbling way. The sanitary products they had just received would undoubtedly make a huge difference in their education. No more limits!

Zonta e-Club of West Africa is a member of Zonta International (www.zonta.org), a leading global organization of executives and professionals working together to advance the status of women worldwide through service and advocacy. The e-Club welcomes new members who care about the status of women and girls around the globe and are committed to using their expertise to address regional challenges and engage in local projects in service to their community. Zontians donate their time, talent and money to create lasting change. There are currently 29,000 members in 1,200 clubs across 63 countries all working with like-minded organizations to empower women. 8 November 2019 marks Zonta’s centennial anniversary and we invite corporate Ghana, the media, like-minded organizations and interested volunteers to join us in our celebrations throughout the centennial biennium.