

## Affordable Sanitary Pads for 1500 Ugandan Girls

### Project Summary

The government of Uganda provides “free” primary education for all. However, statistics show that fewer than 38% of girls entering Primary 1 (the equivalent of kindergarten) in 2009 will complete their primary education. Many obstacles stand in the way of successful education for rural African girls but chief among them are issues relating to puberty, teen pregnancy, and early marriage. This project will increase the chances of academic success for 1500 Ugandan girls by:

- Developing the self-supporting production of locally-produced, environmentally-sound sanitary pads (**MakaPads**), which, within 3 years, will provide a sustainable source of free pads for 1500 adolescent girls through the *Kasiisi Project Girls Support Program*.
- Funding the training by the Jane Goodall Institute, Uganda of student educators who will teach their peers about menstrual hygiene, sexually transmitted diseases, and how to avoid early pregnancy. This program has been shown to bring those girls who have dropped out back to school. At the end of 3 years, income generated by **MakaPads** production will finance the peer education program.
- Building girl-friendly latrines with discreet washrooms.
- Producing the first movies in Rutooro, the local language, on puberty, growing up, and ways to protect against unwanted sexual advances.



### Rationale for Project

Eighty five percent (85%) of Ugandans live in rural poverty; earning an average of \$300 a year. More than 50% of the population is under 15 years old, and the education of these children is critical for Uganda’s economic development. Educating girls is widely regarded as one of the best ways to improve the economy and health of developing countries ([www.girleffect.org](http://www.girleffect.org)). However, girls consistently fare less well academically than boys. Academic performance correlates closely with school attendance, and absenteeism, and drop out rates are high for rural Ugandan girls for reasons often linked to their reproductive biology. Menstruation, early pregnancy, and



HIV interfere with their success at school. HIV infection rates in girls are 9 times that of boys the same age. By the time they are 18, over 30% of girls have had their first baby. Uganda has one of the highest maternal death rates in the world; unsafe abortions accounting for a quarter of these deaths. Lack of education and financial inequalities between men and women mean that women often lack the power to control their reproductive health. Girls who frequently attend school earn a higher income in the future, are more independent, and are more likely to be able to make well-informed decisions about their sexual lives. Each additional year of educational attainment can reduce the risk of HIV infection and delay a woman's first pregnancy.



## Project Goals and Objectives

This project addresses the problems of attendance and health by:

### ***Reproductive Health Education***

The Ugandan school system is woefully inadequate in educating boys and girls about healthy sexuality. A 2006 study found that 44% of boys and 50% of girls, aged 15-19, had never participated in a classroom discussion of sexuality nor attended an education talk on sex before their first sexual encounter. For the most part, schoolchildren rely on self-education from peers who often know as little as they do. This project takes advantage of this established mode of learning about sexuality by teaming up with a program run by the Jane Goodall Institute

(Uganda), which trains girls to become peer educators. The JGI peer-education program, already piloted in one of the schools targeted by this project, has been shown to lower dropout rates and improve attendance. This project will finance training and long-term support of peer educators in sixteen rural primary schools for three years. At the end of three years, the peer-education program will be funded by income from the production of **MakaPads** (see below). In addition the project will be producing the first local language movies on puberty and growing up. Peer Educators interviewed in August 2009 reported that movies gave added authority to the information that they were sharing with their peers. Movies in their mother tongue will have all the more impact. Supervision and adult support for the peer educators will be provided by a *Kasiisi Project* funded female Community Health Worker.



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### ***Sanitary Pad Production***

UNICEF estimates that 1 in 10 menstruating African girls skip school four to five days per month or drop out completely. In 2004, a survey of menstruating girls in Uganda found that “the biggest number of school dropouts are girls because of

inconveniences during their menstrual periods.” This absenteeism leads to poor academic performance and subsequent dropping out of school. *Kasiisi Project* data support these findings. Since 2005, the *Kasiisi Project Girls Support*



*Program* has supplied donated sanitary pads and underwear to menstruating girls in five primary schools. *The Kasiisi Project* is also building girl-friendly latrines with washing facilities and incinerators in all project schools. Initial results show a 30% drop in absenteeism in girls receiving sanitary pads and a marked improvement in academic scores. This project aims to expand this program to eleven more schools and make it self-supporting by setting up a local facility to manufacture an affordable, eco-friendly alternative to expensive, imported pads. Dr. Moses Musaaazi, of Makerere University and **Technology 4 Tomorrow**, developed **MakaPads**, which are made from papyrus and recycled paper.

The pads have been shown to be acceptable by young girls and to have an absorption rate three to eight times that of any pad on market. In addition, their production provides a viable income-generating activity for impoverished women. **MakaPads** have agreed to provide the training, equipment and quality control needed to make this a successful venture. (*More about this product:* <http://www.ugpulse.com/articles/daily/homepage.asp?ID=549>) Until the time that this facility become self-supporting and producing sufficient pads, we will continue to supply a decreasing number of imported pads to menstruating girls thus phasing out imported donations over the three years of the project.

## Project Supervision

Project directors Alice Bator and Sarah Quirk interned with **MakaPads** in June and July 2009 and oversaw the start of the project in August. Subsequent supervision of this project in Uganda will be the joint responsibility of US registered charity *The Kasiisi Project* and Ugandan registered Community Based Organization *The Kibale Forest Schools and Student Support Project*. These organizations, founded as a collaboration between US and Ugandan scientists working in Kibale National Park, have had, over the past 13 years, an excellent track record for identifying, supervising and evaluating successful educational support programs for 4000 children in five government primary school. Regular visits by project personnel will keep the program on track.

## Budget

The following budget for a 3 year implementation of the project phases out imported pads and phases in **MakaPads** making the program self-sufficient. At the same time improvements made in girls attendance and academic performance by the *Kasiisi Project Girls Support Program* are maintained and extended. The budget includes an annual inflation rate of 10%.



## BUDGET: Three Year Plan for "Affordable Sanitary Pads for 1,500 Ugandan Girls"

Year 1	Item Cost (\$)	Running Total (\$)
Program Supervisor Salary	4,000	4,000
Motorbike for program supervisor	2,000	6,000
Fuel, phone, office expenses etc	1,500	7,500
Imported Sanitary Pads	20,000	26,000
Underwear	6,000	32,000
Community Health Worker Salary	2,500	34,500
Travel Expenses for Community Health Worker	500	35,000
Teaching Aids: Charts, paper, markers, videos etc	500	35,500
Peer Educator Training for 32 girls and 16 teachers	1,920	37,420
Computer and printer	1,000	38,420
Projector, generator, screen, and batteries	3,000	41,420
Diesel	300	41,720
6 blocks of Girl-friendly latrines @ \$4000 each	24,000	65,720
MakaPad production business management plan and environmental impact assessment	5,000	70,720
Rutooro language films on puberty, reproduction, etc.	3,500	74,220
<b>Year 1 Total</b>	<b>\$74,220</b>	
<b>Year 2</b>		
Program Supervisor Salary	4,400	78,620
Fuel, phone, office expenses etc	1,700	80,320
Imported Sanitary Pads	22,000	100,620
Underwear	6,600	107,220
Community Health Worker Salary	2,750	109,970
Travel Expenses for Community Health Worker	550	110,520
Teaching Aids: Charts, paper, videos, markers etc	550	111,070
Peer Educator Training for 32 girls and 16 teachers at \$65 per person	3,120	114,190
Diesel	330	114,520
Construction and equipping of MakaPad Production plant	45,000	159,520
<b>Year 2 Total</b>	<b>\$87,000</b>	
<b>Year 3</b>		
Program Supervisor Salary	5,000	164,520
Fuel, phone, office expenses etc	2,000	166,520
Imported Sanitary pads	11,000	177,520
Underwear	6,600	184,120
Community Health Worker Salary	3,000	187,120
Travel Expenses	600	187,720
Teaching Aids: Charts, paper, videos, markers, etc.	600	188,320
Peer Educator Training for 32 girls and 16 teachers at \$65 per person	3,360	191,680
Diesel	320	192,000
MakaPad Plant supervisor Salary	5,000	197,000
Administrative and accounting fees	3,000	\$200,000
<b>Year 3 Total</b>	<b>\$40,480</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$200,000</b>