

**Question:** Which population on the planet has the greatest chance of improving global health and leading the world to economic success?

**Hint:** It's a population that we currently restrict and shame.

**Answer:** It's girls; young girls who struggle every month with their periods. With often nothing to use but rags to manage their flow, this generation often skips school for days every month to care for themselves at home.

**The Consequences:** This generation comprises the greatest untapped resource known to humankind. We are losing them to every day.

**The Vision:** Give communities of girls access to effective menstrual management so they can stay in school and learn a skill. When we do so, we elevate not only their lives, but boost local and regional economies and elevate health outcomes; and ultimately the quality of life for all of us worldwide.

Christine Glidden founded Women To Be Inc. (WTB), to become a fundamental component of a comprehensive health effort to provide girls and women in the world the opportunity to stay in school, get an education, participate in day-to-day activities, make informed decisions about bearing children, and become economic drivers in their communities.

Promoting gender equality and empowering women remain an important United Nations Social Development Goal. This includes addressing the issues faced by girls and women who lack access to effective feminine hygiene products. Many girls and women who do not possess proper means for managing their monthly menstrual flow are too often limited in ability to perform daily tasks and/or isolated for 3-5 days every month due to stigma and shame. Girls can miss or drop out of school and women may not be able to fully perform their work duties. They can also be the victims of embarrassing accidents, teasing, and intimidation.

WTB provides cotton underwear, flannel sanitary pads, waterproof barrier layers, a washcloth, and plastic zip lock bags in a cotton carryall called a 'kit'. The kits were strategically designed by our own team of sewing experts. During menstruation, girls and women position a pad inside the underwear. As the day progresses, used pads are put in the plastic bag. Girls replace the used pad with a clean one. End of each day, girls remove

used items from the plastic bag, wash them, dry them, and reuse them the next day. With proper care, kits will last up to three years and have little environmental impact.

Additionally, kit recipients get a reproductive health class and a reusable calendar that allows them to predict their periods and fertility windows to avoid unintended pregnancy. The class covers genitalia, sexual intercourse, the menstrual cycle, and birth. The calendars allow them to track their cycles and make informed decisions regarding intercourse. *Kits can last up to 3 yrs! Nothing to throw away!*

**The Inspiration-** In 2014, Christine was told by a friend who had survived 17 years in a Nepali refugee camp that she would resort to castaway rags and tree leaves to absorb her menstrual flow. Her friend would sit in the corner on a rag each month and wait until her period ended. Such methods of can also cause chronic, painful infection. In the camp, girls would place bags over their heads when entering public areas in order to hide their identities as they bled down their legs. Christine was immediately galvanized to take action. It was abhorrent to her to think of her friend living in this humiliation and pain.

**WTB TAKES ACTION and has important partners and supporters. We've distributed 3100 US volunteer-produced kits. That's 9300 years of opportunity and hope!**

**In Zambia,** Beginning August, 2018, WTB has distributed 1000 US volunteer-produced kits, but has come to realize shipping is not sustainable. WTB is currently partnering with the King of the Bemba People, a tribe of 6M tribal members and the Minister of Education to fund and establish a sewing enterprise to employ Bemba people to fabricate kits.

The Minister is poised to subsidize kits for girls who are unable to afford them as an indicator of their support. Zambian surveys show that girls drop out of school at a higher rate than boys because they do not possess effective means of menstrual management.

Christine has a rich and trusting relationship with the King. His Royal Highness is the 38th in his line through matrilineal blood.

**In Nepal,** WTB has distributed US volunteer-produced kits and a sex education to 1600 girls and women in 2015 and 2016. In 2017, 281 women

and girls who received kits were surveyed. 279 reported that the kits allowed them to perform their duties and stay in school, that they wanted a replacement kit in 2019 when their current kit is no longer effective, and that they would like more kits to give to friends and family who did not initially receive kits.

WTB is currently partnering with a Rotary Club in applying for a Rotary International Grant to establish a centralized sewing center to teach women and men to sew and employ them to sew 5000 kits. A local hospital and women's organizations have committed to buying the kits thereby, insuring sustainability. A needs assessment shows that girls drop out of school at the start of puberty and the local population, particularly women, is suffering from unemployment.

**In the Copper Canyon in Chihuahua Mexico**, WTB is poised to distribute 500 US volunteer-provided kits in April 2019. The end goal is to teach women in Chihuahua and the Tarahumara Indians to sew kits and pay them a fair wage. Here, most women will sew by hand without aid of machines. The Chihuahuan government has dedicated a Health representative to provide transport and support the effort in any way she can.

**In New Mexico**, US Senators Udall and Heinrich, Congresswoman Lujan Grisham, and Albuquerque Mayor Tim Keller have written in support of the partnership between the King and WTB. The Bemba King and his delegation were introduced by WTB to the 19 New Mexico Pueblo Governors for a discussion and ceremony at the All Pueblo Council of Governors. There, the Zambian and New Mexican parties agreed to sign a historic, first-of-its-kind Proclamation to support all tribal women and girls in their health, happiness, and success in life. This 2 week royal visit to New Mexico was hosted by WTB.

**In Acoma Pueblo New Mexico**, Pueblo Governor, Kurt Riley invited the King and WTB representatives to participate in their sacred Feast Day in September 2018 to strengthen relationship and understanding across continents.

**In Albuquerque, New Mexico**, WTB joins with the University of New Mexico (UNM) to provide service-learning opportunities that benefit Zambian communities, WTB and the students. The Anderson School of Management has developed an MBA-level class to research, guide, measure, and provide hands-on assistance for WTB. Students are preparing to create metrics for

understanding the social and economic impact of the project. Students will be given the opportunity to travel to Zambia in 2019 to collect data that can measure impact and guide future actions.

**In Oxford, England**, WTB has been invited by USolve England for the 2019 Global Challenges Mentorship Program for sustainable funding. Oxford University Said Business School MBA student and Rhodes Scholar, Francis Kapinga of Zambia works to extend TDP's reach in all possible UK and Zambian spheres of influence.

**Looking forward** into 2019 and 2020, WTB plans to

- Produce 10,000+ kits in Zambia, Nepal, Mexico.
- WTB is looking to start a project for homeless, refugee, immigrant, and native women and girls in New Mexico who lack menstrual hygiene products due to lack of funds or access.
- Strengthen it's operations. A paid director and assistant will supervise qualified volunteers, organize a grant writing campaign, oversee international operations, and cultivate US and international relationships.

WTB has succeeded through sheer will, hard work, and love of girls. This exceptionally diverse group of committed, effective, and scrappy volunteers view relationships and engagement as the key ingredients to success. But they cannot continue without more generous funding from people like YOU.

**To accomplish these future goals.**

- We need your help in raising unrestricted funds pay a small paid staff.
- Funds are needed to fund sewing center startups that eventually become self-self-sustaining businesses.
- Money means cementing royal and governmental relationships with annual visits.
- Trips to the international sewing centers allow better management and guidance of local staff and leaders.
- Support is needed to expand and organize a volunteer pipeline, conduct successful crowdfunding campaigns, write grants, and expand our network.

**Girls can't wait.** Millions of girls around the globe will get their periods today and not be able to effectively manage their flow. Let's give them an opportunity to succeed, find freedom in life, and retain their dignity.