**ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW**

Humanitarian Efforts for the Learning of the GirlChild in Africa (HELGA) was founded with the main aim being of rescuing of girls from Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP) but has since over time manifested itself as an umbrella of women and youth groups in empowering them social-economically. Women were under represented at all levels and for the girl child to have success it was imperative that we achieve equality inthe community through “Engage + Empower = Equality”. Activities we undertake include

* Creating awareness to the community on human rights with special focus on women’s and children’s rights Economic empowerment for rural women – Trained on bead and brick making and seeking market for these. Provision of plastic water tanks to women groups for rain water harvesting
* Economic empowerment for rural women – Trainings on bead, briquette and brick making and seeking market for these. Provision of plastic water tanks to women groups for rain water harvesting
* Linking of groups to financial institutions, government enterprising funds. We already have two groups that have benefitted from the Women Enterprise Funds
* Reducing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and violence against women and children through sensitization to the girls themselves, the women and community and especially incorporating men as most of them are pro FGM
* Carrying out ‘Speak Out Programs” which train girls to be able to express themselves to an extent of opening up and talk about their problems
* Guidance and Counseling especially on ‘Peer Counseling’. Seeking services from skilled persons for the very traumatized girls depending on their ordeals
* Providing sexual and Reproductive health services by giving information and advice through formation of health and social clubs for boys and girls
* Advocacy and influencing policy- HELGA has actively participated in forums that have advocated in supporting girl child education and ending violence against girls and women. Programme director attended as one of the paper presenters a Regional Ministerial Consultation on re-entry policy for school girls who become pregnant – Mauritius 1993. Closing the gender gap Nairobi 2000
* Running a rescue school and shelter Grace Nanana Education Centre in Kajiado for girls from the harmful traditional practices

**The Project**

This project of uplifting 120 women through their groups aims at addressing the cross-cutting issues mentioned in the Country Strategy Paper for Kenya which include;

1. Gender Equality – Women Empowerment
2. Environment Protection & Climate Change – Alternative, cleaner and affordable cooking fuel
3. Capacity Building –Enhancing local community through capacity building to reduce dependence on aid in establishing income generating activities

We particularly intend to focus on the third issue of Capacity Building. We intend to strengthen women’s and youth capacity to effectively participate and benefit from the energy and housing sectors as actors and beneficiaries.

**General Objective**

To strengthen women’s capacity to effectively participate in and benefit from the energy sectors and a healthier community

**Specific Objectives**

1. To strengthen institutional capacity of HELGA, Women, Youth groups and partners to undertake and use gender equality and women empowerment strategies in delivering in the energy sectors
2. To strengthen a sustainable energy market for 120 women in Kajiado Central
3. To provide strong linkages to local county governments, retailer networks in Kajiado Central
4. To lobby and advocate for adoption of women empowerment approaches in delivering new targets for clean energy solutions
5. To achieve part of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, which aims to end hunger, ensure food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture, by 2030.

**Project justification**

Statistics show that only 12.8% (Kajiado County Integrated Development Plan 2013-2017) of the rural women are self-employed hence the need to improve the livelihoods and food security of women through the initiation of appropriate technology, micro enterprise development initiatives (MEDI’s), trainings on entrepreneurial skills, leading to improved shelter, better living health standards, income independency hence a society with an empowered woman well aware of all her rights. A more involved network of all institutions fighting vices against the girl-child and women in general for a greater voice in the society.

Since the beginning of March 2018, there has been a ban enforced by the Kajiado County government on the sale of charcoal and monitoring of sand harvesting. This two play a major role in the lives of our local community for the women as is one of the main sources of income of the women in the local community has since been banned. We intend to use this opportunity to empower the women in capacity building in briquettes making as an alternative as a source of cooking fuel and income.

Female-led households in Kenya often have lower food and nutrition security. In female-led households (proportion in Kenya is 34%) there is often a lack of access to agricultural resources, markets, credit and information. If women had the same access to these resources, yields could rise by 20-30% and malnutrition could be reduced by 12-17% (FAO 2011). Female-managed yields and households are especially affected by changing climate conditions, due to the limited access to resources and, thereby, the limited adaptation possibility (Mutimba et al. 2010). The women in this area (Purko location) have hence resorted to other sources of acquiring income e.g. quarrying which is a health hazard as they do not have any tools to do the work e.g. gas masks, implements, shades, they are at the mercy of the weather... They go with their children to the mines since they don’t have the resources to employ care givers.

**Why Briquette Making**

As women increasingly earn their own income, the power balance regarding decision-making may shift. In general, when women become economically empowered, their influence over resource allocation is likely to increase. They tend to favour the immediate well-being of the family, especially children, which should have a positive effect on child health and nutrition outcomes. However, working outside the home may reduce mothers’ time with their children and the gains from an increased income and control over spending may be offset by a decline in the quality of child care because in their absence, mothers must rely on a substitute caregiver to ensure their children receive the care they need.

***Briquette making can be done from the comfort of one’s home***.

We intend to do this by first taking 120 women through capacity building in Bookkeeping, Briquette making, Practical, hands-on business training & support.

Charcoal briquettes are made by mixing charcoal dust with water and a binding agent such as soil, paper or starch. The resultant ‘dough’ is shaped by hand, or moulded in wooden or metal presses into fist-sized units, which are then air-dried. Women and youth make up the majority of those employed in this informal industry.

By 2010 some of the most successful community groups in Kibera, Kahawa Soweto, and similar low-income neighbourhoods in Nairobi were making up to $2000 monthly from the sale of charcoal briquettes, and women were slashing their cooking-fuel costs to a tenth or less, says a recently published study in the International Journal of Renewable Energy Development. We hope to replicate this to our community.

Instead of spending hours collecting firewood, the women in these villages will be able to utilise that time in other activities.  It also relieves them of the pain of carrying firewood on their backs for several kilometres daily.

Converting charcoal dust into usable fuel contributes towards Kenya’s national development aspirations in many important ways, says Mary Njenga, a doctoral fellow with the World Agro forestry Centre (ICRAF) and lead author of the new study. “By saving trees that would otherwise be cut down for charcoal or firewood production, briquetting is protecting the country’s forest, savannah and dry land habitats, and contributing towards the country’s reaching its 10% forest cover target by 2030. It is also easing the energy demand from fossil fuels and grid electricity.”

Briquetting is helping resolve the cooking-energy poverty faced by the poorest households. Along with co-researchers from the University of Nairobi, University of Tsukuba in Japan; the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Uppsala; and partner NGOs, Njenga found that the poorest urban households often selected foodstuffs they could cook in the shortest time regardless of their nutritional value, in order to save on energy.

***“With charcoal briquettes it costs just 3 Kenya Shillings (US$0.04) to cook a traditional meal of maize and beans for a standard household of 5 people. This is nine times cheaper than cooking the same meal with charcoal (KSh 26 or US$0.3) and 15 times cheaper than cooking with kerosene (KSh 45 or US$0.6). As such, households are now able to choose from a wider dietary range,” says Njenga***.

The clean burn of charcoal briquettes dramatically reduces indoor air pollution, one of the leading causes of the 400,000 deaths from respiratory diseases that occur each year in sub-Saharan Africa.

**Sustainability**

The sustainability of the project will be built on proposed interventions in training built on technical and business skills of the women and youth in giving them a lasting ability to sustainably manage and expand their business as well as attract funding from Financial Institutions.

The project will work with for profit social enterprises brick and briquette manufactures to ensure that the linkages built with the groups during the project are sustained beyond the project period

The key impacts of this action will be business of the groups expanded to reach a substantial scale in terms of financial growth, improved technical capacity and expanded business growth.

As we will instil book keeping, and briquette making knowledge as soon as the group to start generating income and the resultant funds, will then be shared equally between the group members (30%), savings for the group (40%) and a HELGA fund (30%) to be used in any other project that has been identified by the community e.g. water and sanitation and/or replicating the training to other groups by purchase of additional machines and training facilitation in the greater Kajiado County.

**Activities include**

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| 1 .Community sensitization and awareness on project area of operation- Ongoing |
| 2. Confirmation of all Stake holders (facilitators, groups, local government.) - Ongoing |
| 3. Purchase of training equipment and materials |
| 4.Training/Workshop by facilitators to group leaders and other stakeholders |
| 5.Preparation of training dates with stake holders and community |
| 6.Trainings and Workshops - |
| 7.Monitoring and Evaluation- All through |
| 9.Reporting – Monthly and when requested |