**

***Building Futures in Malawi***

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**PROJECT PROPOSAL**

**PROJECT TITLE:** EMPOWERING 600 GIRLS HYGIENE FOR SCHOOL PROJECT IN THE DISTRICT OF LILONGWE

**IMPLEMENTING AGENCY:** BUILDING FUTURES IN MALAWI (BFM)

**FUNDING AGENCY: DONOR AID/FUNDRAISING**

**Organization Background**

Building Futures in Malawi is a non-profit organization (Charity) registered under the Malawi act (CAP: 501) and also registered with CONGOMA registration number C1269/2019. The organizations mission is to support education in Malawi, in particular by providing assistance if possible where there is a need for support staff and services.

BFM works in partnership with schools in developing the potential of the youth and adults to enable them improve their lives through educational related activities.

**Project Background**

Millions of girls in Sub-Saharan Africa are disempowered by the simple biological process of menstruation. Affordable and hygienic sanitary protection is not available to girls in many areas. They resort to the use of unhygienic rags and cloths which puts them at the risks of infections. UNICEF estimates that1 in 10 menstruating African girls skip school four to five days per month or drop out completely. A girl absents from school due to menstrual for four days every 28-day cycle loses 13 learning days, the equivalent to two weeks of learning, every school term, studies show that every year of schooling increases a girl’s future earning power by 10 to 20 percent. In addition, each additional year a girl is in school can reduce the risk HIV infection and delay girls first pregnancy, Educated girls are more likely to become empowered women, they are more likely to take control of their lives, have economic security and raise fewer and healthier children who will in turn be more likely to be educated themselves. We aim to target 600 girls in schools and it will roll out in the rural communities within the city of Lilongwe in 3 school namely Minga Community Day Secondary School, Chiwamba Community Day Secondary School and Mseche Secondary School

**Malawi**

The median age in Malawi is 16.4 years old. Approximately eighty-five percent, 71% of Malawi lives in extreme poverty; earning an average of $693.50 a year. The education of these children is critical for Malawi’s economic development. Educating girls is widely regarded as one of the best ways to improve the economy and health of developing countries. Girls, however, consistently fare less well academically than boys. Academic performance is closely correlated with school attendance and absenteeism and dropout rates are high rural Malawian girls. Studies have shown that these high rates are often linked to their reproductive biology.

In 2004, a survey of menstruating girls in Malawi found that “The biggest numbers of school dropouts are girls because of inconveniences during their menstrual periods” In 1994, the government of Malawi started providing FREE primary education for all children starting from standard 1 up through standard 8.

**Proposed Solution**

Reusable sanitary pads are sustainable and easily renewable resource allowing the girls to wash and reuse the rather than having to buy disposable pads every month. In addition, they are comparatively inexpensive and environmentally friendly. The social benefit of the implementation of this concept can greatly mitigate the disadvantages and challenges many disempowered girls endure their process of maturing.

**Pilot Project Synopsis**

The goal of the pilot project will be

1. Create an immediate supply of reusable sanitary napkin kits for the young girls in the programme

2. Create a Vocation Training programme focused on seamstress and sewing skills. Part of the training in this curriculum will be the manufacture of the reusable pad kits to be “paid forward) to other girls in the region.

3. Connect with Non-Governmental Organization teaching girls reproductive health and safety. Be focal point for the development and expansion of health awareness programs to bring concepts such as feminine hygiene, programmed parenthood and general wellbeing.

4. Grow/expand the Vocational training program into a sustainable part time industry providing a viable income generating activity for impoverished women to manufacture pad kits.

5. Create and promote an activist campaign to create awareness in the global community and to petition the Malawi government to allocate funding to prevent girls from missing school due to lack of sanitary pads. To cite and example, the government of Kenya has recently established a gender-responsive funding initiative with this goal by providing free pads to school girls.

**Pilot project details**

**Phase 1-Immediate Needs**

The goal of Phase 1 is to provide a quantity of 600 Pad Kits in a period of 3 months. This will take care of the immediate need of the girls in the pilot program. This will be broken down into two separate stages.

**Manufacture of Pad Kits-Corporate Level**

**SUPREME SANITARY PADS, P.O BOX 5, NKHATABAY, MALAWI. PHONE: +265 996 817289 EMAIL:** **SUPREME.MALAWI@OUTLOOK.COM****,** will take the lead as the corporate manufacture for the development of the Pad Kits.

Each reusable Feminine Cloth Pad Kit consist of

* 4 Max Pads
* 3 Medium Pads
* 3 Small Pads/Panty liners
* 1 Bag for clean Pads
* 1 Bag for Dirty Pads

**Manufacture of Pad Kits – Individual Level**

Many compassionate individuals feel the calling to give of their time and energy as well as of their resources. To this end, Building Futures in Malawi will put up on their website the following items for individuals who wish to contribute their talent and make Pad Kits themselves.

* Bill of Materials
* Pattern of Pads and Bags
* Written Instructions
* An Instruction video

**Phase 2 – Vocation Training Program**

**Upgrading the Current Curriculum**

The Vocational Training Program at BFM will be include seamstress/sewing skills. An instructor will be hired for teaching these skilled to the girls at BFM. This program will be used to teach a full range of seamstress skills for future empowerment and job security of the girls at BFM after they have graduated and have moved on from the school. A suitable building/classroom will be converted to this use. Stock material and supplies as BFM is not located in the Malawi power grid, the choice for sewing machines for instruction will reflect this. Initially, 4 treadle-style (Foot pedal powered) sewing machines, 4 electrical sewing machines and also one overlock machine will be purchased.

**Service to Others.**

Trademarks of BFM projects are education, empowerment and service to others. As part of the sewing curriculum, the students will practice their newly acquired skills with the fabrication of Pad Kits. As part of their community service, the girls will help distribute the Pad Kits they have made to other girls in the region. Lilongwe communities in particular have been devastated by both the scourge of AIDS.

BFM believes the best way to reweave a sense of community is through helping others. To form, educate and empower communities has been the underlying purpose behind all the global initiatives of BMF. This reweaving back into society is particularly important with children who have been orphaned, abandoned and disempowered.

**Empowering Young Women.**

Once the girls at BFM have acquired a skill-set that they can market, they will need the equipment to do so. Older girls in the program will be given portable, battery operated sewing machines with a solar battery charger. This will empower the young women with the tools of trade for when they leave BFM.

An important aspect built into the vocational program that underlines this project is the fact that the vocational program is designed to go beyond the normal expectations of other NGO’s working on the same premises. It gives power to the girls and young women to not only receive normal education but to also acquire a marketable skill and be able, after the curricular is concluded to walk out of the program as an empowered human being, retaining not only the ability to succeed in life but also with the material tools to do so.

**Phase 3-Synergy with related NGO’s**

**Apply synergy and teamwork to accomplish goals**

*Synergy is the process where two or more actions combine to produce an effect greater than the sum of its individual parts. Like ripples in a pond, spiritual actions combine and build on each other to magnify an effect beyond what each could do individually. Whenever possible. Team up with others to acquire a multifaceted and more holistic approach.*

There are multiple NGO’s working in the field of Women’s Reproductive Health & AIDS awareness in Malawi either through seminars or the training of Peer Education (For example, National Aids Commission, NAC). The goal of this phase will be to link to other organizations who we can work with to ripple out the reach of the project both during the pilot project phase and ultimately to assist in the creation of future Pads for school girl’s programs.

Our direct benefit will be to receive training and counselling for the girls in the Pilot Project at BFM. The partner organization benefit will be to receive Pads Kits made by the girls as part of their Community Service, help identify need and distribute Pad Kits to expand the impact in the region.

**Phase 4-Income Generation for Impoverished Women**

As the Vocation Training Program at BFM is an enhancement to the primary focus of a core education curriculum, there will be times when the sewing machines are not being used for student vocational instruction. It is the ad of this phase of the Pad Project to use the “down time” for the teaching of sewing skills to woman in the local community, As the goal is immediate income generation, full seamstress skills will not be taught initially, although there may be a demand for this down the road. The skills taught will be geared towards the fabrication of the Pad Kits. One of the ripples of this facet is the empowerment of local women, bringing them new options to directly improve their life conditions, generate self-confidence and opening their scope of possibilities and participation in the fabric of society. A cooperative of women will be organized to manufacture PAD Kits for sale. Additional sewing machines will be purchased for the use of the cooperative. Our objective here is to create an engine of local sustainable income generation that will gradually eliminate reliance on the more expensive imported Pad Kits from phase 1. Our ultimate goal would be to sell thus product to a government programme outlined in Phase 5 for distribution.

**Phase 5-Activism Campaign for Gender-Responsive Educational Funding.**

As part of the Pads for School girls, BFM will start an activist campaign to lobby female members of the Malawi Parliament, among others to apply gender responsive budgeting as part of the educational funding, Gender responsive budgeting is being sensitive to the distinctive needs of men and women while the allocating and spending public funds. We should like to petition Malawi to follow Kenya’s lead in providing subsidized sanitary products for disadvantaged school girls in order to keep them in school.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

BFM will monitor the implementation of the project to see that the goal, objectives and expected outcomes are accomplished. The Executive Director and the project officer will keep visiting beneficiary schools one time a month. Monthly reports will be written and evaluate the project for improvement and assessing the objectives against outcomes. At the end of the project, there will be an evaluation meeting between the project staff and the beneficiary schools. Monitoring and evaluation will involve: identifying number of participants and regularity of attendance, identifying number of participants successfully completing the project, recording participants from schools, designing questionnaires for participants to assess their satisfaction with the programme, recording of the number of volunteer who successfully complete the program and continue to work with BMF, interviewing participating schools/participants/head teachers the conditions and use of equipment provided.

**Organizations contribution**

BFM is a not-for-profit organization established for charitable purposes and therefore depends on donations, fundraising and membership subscriptions. The project will run for 12 months and will continue if further funding is made available.