



Women Refugee' Impossible Dream is becoming a reality

PRIDEnoSHAPE Project set-up a production of UZIMA, affordable, organic and compostable Sanitary Pads in Mahama Camp, Rwanda.



In a nutshell

This 18-month project, which started in November 2019, intends to bring affordable sanitary pads to approximately **19'000 women and girls living in the Mahama refugee camp**, Rwanda. This project was conceptualized by the community of Mahama, and will be 100% sustainable and women led.

The problem

Thousands of girls and women (over 60'000) live in Rwandan in refugee camps as a result of regional wars in neighboring Burundi and in the Democratic Republic of Congo. When they menstruate, they do not have access to affordable sanitary pads, they often use a piece of cloth or other material they can find, and water is lacking; these unhygienic conditions cause vaginal infections, skin irritations and often embarrassing stains in public and stigmatizing situations.

This is not only a problem in the camps: there are 2.8 million menstruating women and girls in Rwanda and pads are not widely used because of lack of knowledge or lack of access to products. Reportedly 18% of girls miss school

regularly when they menstruate. The Government recognized this as an issue and recently (2019) lifted the taxes for sanitary pads, to promote their use.

Our goal

The aim of the project is to improve livelihoods of women and girls in and around the Mahama refugee camp in Rwanda. The specific goal of this project is to provide women and girls living in Mahama refugee camp an affordable solution to their hygienic needs when menstruating and to generate an income, by creating a sustainable production of sanitary pads by women for women. The wider scope of the project is to extend the availability of affordable sanitary pads in Rwanda also to women and girls outside the camp as well in other camps.

The solution that the project seeks to achieve is based on the principle of:

- a) affordability: women with no means should be able to receive them free of charge;
- b) environmentally sustainability: the pads will be made of organic, compostable and good quality material; for now, the best quality will be sourced from India; an alternative in Africa, is presently sought but not yet found.
- c) viability: the machines are of good quality, easy to operate and maintain. Women will earn an extra income when trained in the maintenance and operation as well as the marketing of the pads. The machine when operating at full capacity, will generate a surplus which will be sold in/outside the camps.



Beneficiaries and target groups (format infographics)

The primary beneficiaries are the women living in the Mahama refugee's camp (around 19'000 women). Other beneficiaries include women outside the camp, who will have access to sanitary pads at affordable prices, either through aid agencies or through the marketplace.

The target groups include:

- around 5000 women and adolescents trained in the use and disposal of the sanitary pads;
- 10 to 20 women who will be trained to work in the manufacturing facility;
- 10 to 20 women trained to market the sanitary pads outside the camp;
- 40 women trained to explain preventive measures and create awareness to use sanitary pads regularly in influencing others positively inside the camp and into neighbouring villages.
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Budget/Investment:

The total budget of **388'000 US\$** includes:

- i) Sanitary pads production machine from India and its transport from India to Mahama camp.
- ii) Raw material (calculated for the first 12 months of the operation) including cargo shipment from India to Mahama.
- iii) Building of a small factory within the Mahama camp
- iv) Training of 40 women
- v) Awareness raising in monthly sessions by 40 women
- vi) Management and supervision of production in the refugee camp.

100,000 US\$ of the total budget of 356, 000 US\$ have already been raised. **The remaining 256'000 US\$** is now needed to realize the project.

The project aims to be self-sufficient from second half of 2021; the net income resulting from the sale of sanitary pads in and outside the camp will be used to invest in new machines and to buy raw material.

Mahama Camp: Sanitary Pads production in the Refugee Camp



Planned Activities

- Set up of a production facility within the camp
 - a) Work with local partner(s) in identifying the best solution concerning machinery and raw material
 - b) Research for best machine configuration (concluded)
 - c) Purchase and transport of machine and raw material (the production machine has been acquired, the purchase of raw material is under way: arrival expected in April-May 2020)
 - d) Ensure government support for tax exempted import of machines and raw material from abroad
 - e) Building of an assemble factory in the Refugee camp
 - f) Sourcing of raw material. Initially these will be sourced in India while an alternative, organic and fully compostable raw material produced in Rwanda or in the neighboring countries is being studied.
- Ensure regular and sustainable production:
 - a) Set up organisation and factory management, with help of local partners and community leaders
 - b) Train 10 to 20 women of the camp in the use and maintenance;
 - c) Monitoring production, ensuring that quarterly increased production target is reached within 1 year.
- Ensure sanitary pads are used and correctly disposed of:
 - a) Train a group of women (“influencers”) in the camp;
 - b) Raise awareness on use and disposal
- Marketing:
 - a) Ensure formal contracting with a sales manager or agencies that distribute sanitary pads in country and in the region.
 - b) Informal marketing: Train women 10 to 20 women to sell pads outside the camps

Partners (replace the names with the logo of the org.)

- The main partner of FOH is [Maison Shalom](#): they will be in charge of the construction (to be finalized by March 2020) and getting the necessary green lights; supporting the organization and management of the building in our awareness campaigns;
- UNHCR, International NGO Organizations: they will be instrumental in buying the pads and distribute these to other refugee camps across Rwanda and other countries;
- Governmental institutions: they will run specific trainings on menstrual health & hygiene in camp and schools.

Responsibilities and contact persons

The overall Project-Responsibility is with Friends of Humanity (Graziella Zanoletti); the management and execution in Rwanda itself is supervised by Maison Shalom, Marguerite Barankitse and Richard Nijimbere.

Friends of Humanity (FOH) is a Geneva-based non-profit organization supporting initiatives and projects in four key areas: Human rights and dignity; Education and training; Healthcare and medicine (including alternative medicine); Environmental protection and conservation. FOH projects are currently underway in Asia and Africa. FOH directly supports initiatives and plays an intermediary role in supporting projects of other humanitarian organizations when they are consistent with the statutes and objectives of FOH. Moreover, communication and raising public awareness are an integral part of the FOH mission. FOH was founded and registered as a non-profit organization on 16 May 2007 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Contact name and number

Graziella Zanoletti, Founder and President of Friends of Humanity/ FOH

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Happy Women having received Sanitary napkins



- Our Rwandan partner: Marguerite Barankitse founder of Maison Shalom (logo), has received many awards. Among them we cite :
- The Human Rights award of the French government), Nansen Refugee Award, Opus Prize, Prize for Conflict Prevention from the hands of Kofi Annan and recently the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity, an award given to humanitarians in memory of the Armenian Genocide.
- Our partner in Geneva: [Giving Women](#) a network of women founded by Atalanti Moquette which aim is to build a community of informed women philanthropists and to make a meaningful difference in the lives of girls and women in need.

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