

Girl Power Gulu Project Hope Center Uganda

Abstract:

Girl Power Gulu aims to empower young girls and women to reach their full potentials in the classroom and in society. We target the region of Sub-Saharan Africa, specifically in the country of Uganda, because it faces tremendous challenges with reproductive health and family planning. Some of these challenges include: early teenage pregnancies, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, inadequate access to feminine hygiene products, and an overall lack of information on basic concepts concerning reproductive health due to cultural stigma.

Due to the high poverty rate in this area, vulnerable, young girls often end up being misled by boys who convince them that engaging in sex is the only way to get rid of their periods (thus eliminating the need to spend money on sanitary pads.) This causes rampant teen pregnancy that forces girls to dropout of school at a young age, destroys their chances of getting jobs, and ultimately prevents them from breaking out of the poverty cycle. Girl Power Gulu was created to address this dire menstrual health need in the region of northern Uganda.

Background:

Hope Center Uganda is a non-profit organization established in 2015 with a goal to reach vulnerable youth and women in Gulu, Uganda. Each target beneficiary group has a project designed to suits their needs, ranging from an afterschool program for children and a micro-loan program for female entrepreneurs.

However, we realized there was a huge gap with female youth. Looking at the 24 years of insurgency that Northern Uganda experienced, many people never got access to good education, lives were lost, severe injuries and rape occurred, and homes were destroyed. Many children were left as orphans, and they became head of families at extremely young ages. Most especially the female child who never had the privilege to access education, thus leaving them illiterate with no idea or knowledge about how to understand or manage their menstrual health. Present-day women cannot afford overpriced store sanitary pads, and most of them use pieces of cloth, causing unhealthy conditions because they can't even afford washing detergents. As the result of above challenges and undesired responsibilities the girls are forced into early marriages, this aggressive cycle of incomplete schools and lives of poverty has been sustained for generations. It is past time to change the realities of menstruation for young women in Uganda.

Girl Power was started in May 2017 by two American students, Lucy Russell and Anna Shuford, with the goal of reaching young girls between the ages of 9-22 years old with basic reproductive health lessons, comprehensive sexual education and distribution of sanitary pads. They started the program with over \$4,000 in seed money from a successful GoFundMe campaign, with an initial goal to reach 150 local girls and women. Due to the high demand for the offerings of Girl Power Gulu, the

program has far surpassed the initial target of 150 women and has now reached hundreds of individuals across northern Uganda.

Magnitude of Reach:

As of March 2019, the project has reached 746 girls. Our target is to reach 2000 girls in Northern Uganda by December 2019, doubling our current impact. Currently, we have reached 243 girls at Agole primary school, Amuru District, 110 girls at Kasubi primary school, Gulu District, 103 girls at Bucoro Primary school, Gulu District, 192 girls at St. Mbuga Primary school and 92 girls at Awach Primary school, Gulu district. It came to our attention that girls between the above mentioned ages drop out of the school due to the huge poverty gap existing in their community. It is noted that at least six girls drop out of school every term, and most of the challenges is related to poverty, lack of sensitization on the sexual education, and barriers to menstruation hygiene.

HCU started by distributing disposable sanitary pads in 3 primary schools in Gulu, Amuru and Omoro in the first year of work. We were able to reach 110 refugees girls as well in Adjumani district where most of the South Sudanese refugees are camped. All effort is being done to create awareness and breaking the chain of silence among young girls about menstrual taboos in the community. In order to keep the girl child in school, HCU in collaboration with local stakeholders adopted a slogan #**"close your legs and open a book"** in an attempt to keep the girls in school by engaging their parents, teachers and the girls themselves.

In October 2018, a new partnership formed between Girl Power Gulu and *She for She*. *She for She* teaches workshops to our Girl Power Leaders on how to make and safely maintain the reusable pads so the production can continue and distribution can reach across the community. We have trained girls who are ROLE models in communities, they help in guiding, advising and supply the pads when the girls run out of it for use. They coordinate the HCU office and the community, production of the sanitary pads is their entire work. We had a training on how to make the reusable sanitary pads, in our first production we were able to produce 340 packs that we supplied to the women and the girls. Reusable pads are more effective because one can be used for at least 2 years. We train the girls about how to use the supplies and other ways to promote menstrual hygiene. Our sustainable goal is to start selling the parents and mothers who can afford to buy. We intend to maximize sales that will meet the costs for production for the young girls in primary school who can't afford any sanitary pads.

Production Costs:

Number	Item	Quantity	Costs	Target Output
1	Waterproof materials	100 meters	3,600,000 (1000\$)	2,000 pieces
2	African fabrics	100 meters	500,000 (140\$)	2,000 pieces
3	Inner cotton	2,000 pieces	700,000 (195\$)	2,000 pieces
4	Threads, buttons	2,000 pieces	470,000 (131\$)	2,000 pieces
5	Volunteer allowances	Monthly	300,000 (100\$)	Depending on contract.
6	Staff supervisor	Monthly	420,000 (120\$)	Depending on contact.
7	Petrol for field visit	Monthly	560,000 (150\$)	1-2 times per month
8	Extra funds for lesson supplies	Monthly	630,000 (\$170)	Multiple lessons per month
Total			7,180,000 (\$1,942)	

Donation Levels for Global Giving:

Amount	Description
\$10	can save a girl's education by providing one reusable sanitary pad
\$40	will purchase sanitary pads for 5 girls

\$80	will purchase sanitary pads for 10 girls
\$100	will fund volunteer allowances for one month
\$120	will fund salary for a supervisor to oversee production of sanitary pads
\$140	will purchase the fabric or thread to use in 2000 sanitary pads
\$150	will provide transportation to conduct lessons in rural areas of Uganda
\$170	will provide educational supplies for menstrual health lessons
\$195	will purchase cotton supply for 2000 reusable pads

Project Summary for Global Giving:

Girl Power Gulu addresses menstrual health barriers for young girls in northern Uganda by giving them supplies of feminine hygiene products and educational courses on reproductive health. This program provides women with knowledge of menstruation and safe sex, empowering them to stay in school and advancing the well-being of families and communities.

Target Population:

The project has reached reached out to 746 girls already. Our target is to reach 2000 girls in Northern Uganda by the end of 2019. Currently, we have reached out to 243 girls at Agole primary school, Amuru District, 110 girls at Kasubi primary school, Gulu District, 103 girls at Bucoro Primary school, Gulu District, 192 girls at St. Mbuga Primary school and 92 girls at Awach Primary school, Gulu district.

We aim to reach every primary school in the Acholi sub-region district. We shall focus expansion in the Districts of Gulu, Amuru, Omoro and Nwoya.

We aim to engage with our target of 2,000 girls and women by December 2019. We still have a lot of rural schools in this communities where they are not receiving any of the reproductive health services,

We intend to fully train role models amongst the girls and mothers to help to educate others and supply the pads and do other follow up when a challenge arise.

Mentorship Program

In order to enhance the existing Girl Power Gulu program, we aim to organize an additional component to maximize its reach: a women's mentorship program. This will provide guidance, counseling, comprehensive trainings for young girls to strengthen leadership and confidence for all involved.

While doing the lessons, the official Girl Power Gulu volunteers and employees will host an additional workshop for certain community leaders to enhance their facilitation skills and women's empowerment knowledge. This will create a network of GPG Ambassadors across the country of Uganda who will continue to foster women's empowerment even beyond the lessons.

Fundraising Strategy

We will seize the entire month of March (Women's History Month) to highlight the importance of empowering women and young girls in Gulu.

We will send an initial email to all original donors of the GPG program who gave us seed money in May 2017. Our original fundraiser raised \$4,000, so we can encourage people to donate the same amount they donated last time to potentially double our target goal (\$2,000) this year.