

FACT PROJECT

Name of group or organization; *Facilitators of Community Transformation: (FACT)*

Title of Project; *Reach and Save refugee girls in Malawi from sexual violence*

Project Type: *Health and Environment*

Whether the project involves construction of a permanent building or buildings; No

Brief purpose of the program;

The aim of the project is to empower 200 women Dzaleka refugee camp with skills and tailoring equipment for the production of reusable sanitary pads that will benefit over 1500 girls and young women with the purpose of contributing to reduction in Sexual and gender based violence, early marriages and environmental sanitation and hygiene.

Program period proposed; *1st October 2019– 1st November 2020*

Location of Project: *Dzaleka refugee camp.*

Sponsoring organization or agency; (Name, Title, Postal Address, Landline Phone (if any), Mobile Phone(s), E-Mail);

Project Manager: *Mrs. Thokozile Nkhoma,*

Title: *Executive Director,*

Postal Address: *Along M1 Road, Area 18, P.O. Box 30407, Lilongwe 3*

Land Line: *(+265) 211 643 884*

Mobile Phone: *(+265) 995 643 884, (+265) 999 772 760*

Organizational Email: [*pthokozile@factmw.org*](mailto:pthokozile@factmw.org)

Website: [*www.factmw.org*](http://www.factmw.org)

2. Project Plan

i. Community problem

Malawi has made considerable effort in keeping girls in schools, however it is also worth noting that challenges such as poor menstrual health management have significant impact in the overall development of adolescent girls and young women. 58% of girls drop out of school and out of those remaining in school, 18% became pregnant and eight percent get married leaving only 25% of girls finishing primary school. Menstruation creates a set of physical, socio - cultural and economic challenges that interfere with a young woman's ability to attend school or to participate fully in classroom activities. Poor menstrual hygiene management has been shown to result in a sense of shame, anxiety, and embarrassment that contributes to absenteeism and poor performance at school , primarily due to Lack of adequate sanitary materials. Malawi's refugee situation has worsened due to continued donor decrease in external support. Children and their parents have no access to food, this crisis will affect a total number of 36,000 refugees in Malawi, as a result, Refugees that are fleeing from the camp and facing sexual and gender based violation especially young girl refugees. (<https://times.mw/defiled-pregnant-at-12-a-refugees-gloominess-story/>) This project will empower girl refugees in the camp with skills and knowledge to make reusable pads to raise funds for their sexual and reproductive needs and substantiate their economic needs, whilst also serving the schools within the camp and in surrounding host communities.

Dowa and Dzaleka camp is one of the rural areas in Malawi that is facing the impact of inadequacy of comprehensive menstrual health management interventions. With regard to the socio-economic standards of women and girls in the area, they can not afford commercially produced products, These are unavailable in rural areas or expensive for most families, purchase of disposable sanitary pads costs US\$2 a packet at minimum. Reliance on cloth rags restricts physical mobility, as girls do not have adequate supplies to prevent leaks or maintain hygiene and these rags cause irritation, resulting in chafing and other unpleasantness as well as humiliation.

Whilst dealing with the double impact of menstrual health, Dowa and Dzaleka refugee camps has poor disposal plan for the used menstrual remnants within the community and the schools, creating over flooding of pit latrines which further creates environmental degradation, For instance Dzaleka school has over 2000 girls and yet has no incinerators for burning the used pads/rags, but relies on the pit latrines for disposal which creates over flooding of the latrines. Though very few are aware, Malawi is on a fast ticking bomb due to its continued silence on menstrual health management which apart from largely contributing to school drop outs among girls it is also hurting the environment due to poor disposal of the sanitary materials used by menstruating women and girls. (<http://www.maravipost.com/malawi-poor-menstrual-health-management-posing-a-threat-to-life/>)

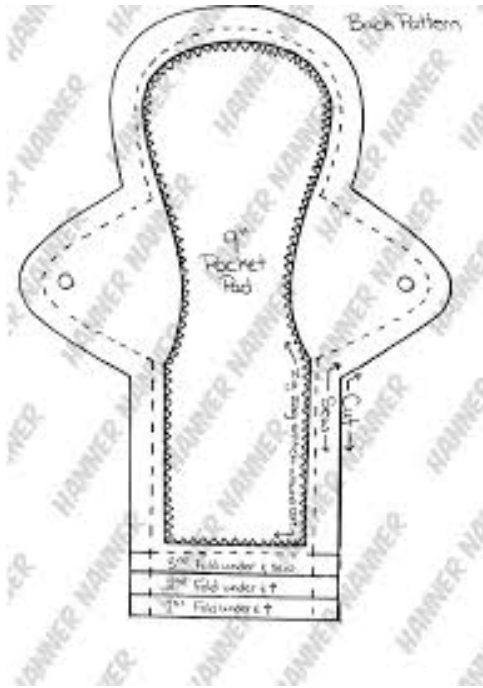
Mother groups are catalytic in the equation of improved MHM, since mothers are the primary source of information; they need empowerment to dispell taboos related to menstruation. Reusable pads are environmentally friendly and cost efficient and provides double benefits for the communities in that they keep girls in school, improves environmental sanitation and hygiene conditions and restores the dignity, freedom and quality of life for women and girls who are also economically disadvantaged.

ii. Project Scope

Reusable sanitary pads have not well been popularized within Dowa and Dzaleka refugee camp and women lack skills and sensitization to fully migrate to this better option. FACT will through this project work with the Village Development Committee to ensure that mother groups within the refugee camps and Dowa host communities for refugees are capacitated with skills and tools to roll out reusable pads. This will entail purchase of sewing machines for the identified mother groups and schools within the catchment area, engaging trainers to train the mother groups and teachers on how to sew reusable sanitary pads. It is worth mentioning that locally found materials will be used during the production making this intervention sustainable and cost efficient in the long run.

Mother groups are already existing structures and have on going interventions such as village savings and loans, it is envisaged that these systems of income generating shall provide a cushioning effect on the sustainability of the program such as catering for on going needs of low maintenance of the sewing machines and sourcing of locally found materials for making reusable sanitary pads such as used Garments, Foam and Plastic. Mother groups fall within the local community governance and comprise of a group of women who are deemed to be advisors and leaders to all women and girls in the community, they have a crucial role in the development of AGYWs in the society given their fundamental mentorship responsibility. Their role is to ensure girls remain in school and complete their education in addition to providing sexual and reproductive health information. They also encourage girls that have dropped out of school due to early marriages or pregnancy return to school.

Image 1.1: *Technical Drawings of reusable Sanitary Pads*



iii. Project Activities

The project will have two main activities thus :-

- 200 Adolescent girls from Dzaleka refugee camp and 5 teachers from five schools trained on sewing reusable sanitary pads
It is anticipated that the Community through the parents will provide materials for the making of the sanitary and provide training materials; The organization will facilitate the provision of resource person to train the identified trainees
- The project will facilitate procurement and distribution of 25 sewing machines, 3 per mother group, and 1 per school for each of the five schools.
It is expected that after the trainings of the teachers, will be able to utilize Expressive Arts teaching periods in primary education and Home economics lessons at secondary school, to enable the learners to gain these skills which will be used in future as part and parcel of sustainability of the project, The skills acquired will later be passed on multigenerational.

In Addition to the above listed intervention FACT will through community structures work to promote the usage of these reusable sanitary pads to ensure that the girls and women from Dowa district and Dzaleka refugee camp understand the advantages of migrating to the new environmentally friendly and cost effective Menstrual Hygiene option.

v. Project involvement

The communities of Dowa and Dzaleka refugee camp have been involved from the conception stage of this proposal process, the mother groups in the area have played a catalytic role in identifying the challenges that girls are encountering and this has informed the approaches that have been incorporated in this document. In implementing the project the mother groups and school committees of the area will play a vital role in ensuring its success through joint and inclusive monitoring of the interventions to be conducted as well as conducting oversight to the whole process including procurement and utilization of project materials, since mother groups are community structures that are embedded within the community governance systems, they will report to the relevant authorities such as Village Development Committees at a community level making this interventions sync with community systems and processes. These mother groups will also be responsible for mobilizing community contribution, this is a continuous process within the community, these groups are already doing similar community resource mobilization through communal funerals, weddings and traditional cleansing rituals.

Vi. Project results

a. Reduction in incidences of sexual and gender based violence targeted at refugee girls.

Through this project we anticipate to contribute t the reduction of cases of Sexual and gender based violence targeted at refugee adolescent girls and young women since girls will have a means to earn income to substantiate their needs within the camp as such they will no longer rely

on older refugee men in the camp. Hunger problems will have been minimized within the camp through these alternative revenue-generating options among the adolescent girls and young women.

b. Increase in school attendance among refugee girls and performance

A result of these interventions will undo all the negative developments that contribute to girls decreased school attendance. Lack of preparation, knowledge and poor practices surrounding menstruation are key impediments not only to girl's education, but also to self-confidence and personal development. It also normally happens that though physically present in the school they perform poorly in terms of concentration and attention. This is due to constant worry that boys might figure out about their status by their movements and facial expression. Improved lifestyle of girls. They also feel exhausted and weak during menstruation. When girl's menstrual period has coincided with exams they do not get adequate time and opportunity clean and change timely. Some public schools lack basic infrastructure amenities, there is no water facility in toilet, and this also is a challenge to girls.

c. Strengthened role of communities especially mother groups on MHM for women and girls

The establishments of mother groups will serve as a tool to encourage the girls to stay in school as well as provide for an opportunity for the mothers to interface the girls and young women about menstruation management. The mother groups are also expected to encourage adolescent girls and young people who left school due to poor menstruation management and there by taking them back to school. The mother group will be a referral point for counselling as well as working with other stakeholders to help the girls stay in school. The project will also help the adolescent girls and young women to attain their carrier goals through the provision of reusable sanitary pads. It is also anticipated that there will be Increased ability among mother groups and school to generate resources for the welfare of girls during menstruation period such as painkillers and transportation in times of severe bleeding period during school and or in the community.

d. Improved environmental sanitation and hygiene conditions within the community

So many public schools also have no arrangement of disposing the cloth, or disposables, so they opt to put the used cloth and disposables in pit latrines which results in constant overflowing of the latrines which is also a health risk within school, on the other hand some of the disposables are left loitering in public spaces degrading the environment in the long run. This intervention provides a solution for long term environmental management and sanitation health by making the disposables to reusable options.

d. Restoration the dignity and self worth among girls and women in the community, thereby improving the quality of life

Women and girls will begin to move freely and have full enjoyment of their rights within the communities within any fear of shame and burying. On the other hand proper management and privacy of the reusable pads will reduce mockery. When more girls stay in school other girls from

the community will be encouraged and inspired hence increasing school retention and enrollment among girls.

3. PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

- Intended Direct beneficiaries will be 1500 Adolescent girls and Young Women between the age of 13 - 25 years who will benefit at least 2 reusable pads each through this project
- Indirect beneficiaries will be 25 women from 5 mother groups
- 5 Schools within Dowa district where refugees are found, will also benefit from these interventions through reduction in school absenteeism, increased enrollment in school and high performance rates among girls.

4. PROJECT LENGTH

The project will run over a period of 12 months starting from the 1st October 2019 – 30th September 2020.

5. SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Most of the people involved in the implementation of the project will be people from the community. Since these have been involved in the set up of the project, it will help in the putting up measures for sustainability. Mother groups will continue making reusable pads and disposable after the end of the projects, since mother groups are community structures that are embedded within the community they will report to the system for development at a community level making this interventions sync with community systems and processes. These mother groups will also be responsible for mobilizing community contribution, this is a continuous process within the community, these groups are already doing similar community resource mobilization through communal funerals, weddings and traditional cleansing rituals. Sewing machines will be used for sewing of other materials for income generation. *Singer* sewing machines require minimal maintenance and are durable, this product line of equipment/sewing machines will be sought as per quotations attached, and will ensure continuity of activities as these can be maintained in the long run. The Village Development Committees are community structures, which will help in monitoring the project jointly through the councilors and Traditional Authority. The skills that will be imparted in the teachers will be used during school extra curricular activities as such girls will be trained on how to make their own sanitary pads, these skills are going to be passed on multigenerational as such ensuring the project sustainability in the long run, reusable sanitary pads are cost effective as such can be made from locally available materials hence making it sustainable and resilient during economic hard times.