

## **Affordable and Accessible Sanitation for Women: GSP Seed Funding Competition 2018 by Sydney**

My GSP is geared to solving an issue to do with lack or poor sanitation for young girls in Mombasa Kenya. The issue is that young girls in the rural area are unable to access sanitary pads for their menstrual cycle with an alarming 2% only being able to buy sanitary pads. This has majorly contributed to the inconsistency in the girls attendance in school which affects their academic progress. As a solution we are introducing the concept of reusable sanitary pads to the girls an initiative that will use readily cost effective materials such as flannels to make cost effective reusable sanitary pads for the young girls. With this we will be able to solve the core issue of sanitation. Also the project will be implemented as part of women's center as they will make the pads and this acts as source of livelihood and income to them. In addition it is an Eco friendly solution too.

### **What problem does my GSP seek to address and what community am I trying to serve?**

The problem this GSP is aiming to solve is to do with lack or poor sanitation for young girls in our community; Mombasa Kenya. Specifically, we are focused on the menstrual sanitation. In Mombasa about only 16% of pupils going to school can afford sanitary pads hence this is major cause of the girls' inconsistency in attending school. This further became important to us when I learnt corrupt dealings in the county governments embezzle the funds allocated for the provision of this basic need. Being strong women rights advocates, we deemed it right to make a change.

### **Why do I believe that it is important to address the problem I am trying to solve?**

This is important to us firstly because we understand the value education has on an individual in terms of opening lifetime opportunities. Therefore, by solving this issue of them missing school not only will have a positive impact on their lives but the community as well. Also, this is one step closer for me to realize our goal of women empowerment in my community as we are stronger believers in women having same access to opportunities.

### **What is my proposed solution (GSP)?**

The proposed solution to the problem is to introduce the concept on reusable sanitary pads. This is an effective method as first of all the pads will be cost effective as they will be made with materials such as flannels and cotton that are readily available to the girls. Also, by teaching them this skill it will make them independent and also make the project sustainable as the girls will be able to make the pad for themselves. Furthermore, this concept is also eco-friendly and also will act as a source of income as the project will be run at women centers where the sanitary pads will be produced for sale at affordable prices.

### **How is my project uniquely situated to improve the lives of my target community?**

Knowing that over 1 million girls in our community don't go to school due to their lack of access to menstrual hygiene, we believe that going out and giving a pack of pads to these girls isn't the best solution. The girls have never seen what a pad really looks like nor do they know that they can get pregnant after they get their periods. There is lack of access to menstrual hygiene and by giving these girls the appropriate reproductive health education, teaching them how to use reusable sanitary pads and instilling the skill of stitching these sanitary pads in the young females, our project's model of approach is uniquely situated to allow young school females to sustainably and independently have access to menstrual hygiene.

Furthermore, our project allows these young females to continue to sustainably make sanitary pads for themselves, as they will be provided with a package that consists of booklets in both the local

language (Swahili) and English; that will have information on reproductive health mainly teaching how to overcome and what to do in specific situations and a stitching manual that will have a step-by-step guide on how to stitch a sanitary. The package will also have stitching materials that cotton flannel, cotton batting, Velcro and needles and threads. Each target group will specifically be provided with a minimum of 1 stitching machine that they could share and use the machine to create these reusable sanitary pads.

### **Who are my collaborators and what roles do they play in supporting my GSP?**

Some of our crucial collaborators include my mentor who is in charge in guiding me and giving me advise in terms of resource mobilization towards my project. She also helps me planning my sessions and constantly thinking of different ways to improve my GSP whether in terms of sustainability or increasing the scope. I also work with fellow peers who are in younger year levels. They are a crucial part of the GSP as they will be the ones staying back to run the project as I will be clearing from school. They will be in charge of executing the goals of the GSP as I collaborate with them in decision making and further improvements needed for the GSP to touch ore lives. They will be pioneers of the GSP in other areas such as Dar e salaam Tanzania where we envision to spread our wings to.

### **What is my vision for my project? How do I define success? How do I plan to support a sustainable venture?**

I envision my project to be successful if Female Menstruation will not be considered as a “taboo” issue in our obstinate society. Through this, success will be evident as the awareness about menstruation will be spread and the society will be open to contribute to achieving the goal of my GSP to sustainably and independently give young females between the age of 9 – 16 access to menstrual hygiene. Our success will be measured by counting the numbers of young females who are accessible to menstrual hygiene, by having constant communication with the caretakers of these females after the project has been implemented to a certain target group and going for monthly check ups, to check whether the project has had a lasting effect. One way that I envision the project to be sustainable in the long term is to get these females to produce more sanitary pads through the skill of stitching that we instilled in them, then getting these reusable sanitary pads and sell them to local resellers and other collaborators who are willing to buy the product. From the revenue we attain, we aim to give a proportionality to these females so that they could produce reusable sanitary pads for themselves and the rest of the proportionality to the future funding of these project for other target groups, in this way we would have a constant source of funding, being an independent sustainable project. We also aim to work with a service group in our school called “Affordable and Accessible Sanitation for Women that consists of young collaborators from Year 9-12, constantly helping in all sorts of way for our project to reach its goal.