**Executive summary**

Bridget Foundation is a Community Based nonprofit organization, with the goal of implementing government efforts for fighting early child marriage especially in rural parts of the country. Our aim is to protect the girl child’s rights, access to education, GBV awareness, training girls and women in various life skills. This sanitary towels project targets school-going girls from disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds in their puberty.

Bridget foundation is raising funds to provide free sanitary pads to female pupils in the rural parts of Lusaka, Copper belt and Southern provinces. The foundation will distribute the pads to girls in more than 100 schools, both primary and secondary schools. At the primary level, this will include girls from Class 5 to Class 8. The foundation will organize trainings and question-and-answer sessions to give girls a forum to discuss related issues along with female teachers and other staff in the schools. This project will be on-going and is envisioned to address not only girls in these areas but also those in other rural parts of Zambia.

Lack of accessible and affordable sanitary wear has been known to have far reaching implications on social, psychological and physical health of teenage girls and this has been proven to be a major determinant in achieving gender parity in Zambia. Unfortunately provision of sanitary pads and information on reproductive health is concentrated in urban areas.

**Problem Statement:**

Most research has shown that menstruation is one of the key barriers to girls’ school attendance and attainment (APHRC 2010 and ChebII 2012). In rural areas, sanitary supplies are expensive and beyond the means of most households as a result, most girls have to make do with rags or when they can afford, use toilet paper. These makeshift methods are ineffective, uncomfortable, unhygienic and unfriendly, with a strong potential to carrying infections and disease.

**Target Beneficiaries:**

This project will directly benefit over 1000 teenage girls in school and young women. Focus will be made to educate these ladies on safe hygiene practices, create awareness of menstrual and reproductive systems and address the problem of missing school as a result of menstruation.

**Main Objective:**

The main objective of this project is to make sure that girls in rural Zambia will not have to miss out on important matters such as school or work simply because they are menstruating.

**Other Objectives:**

* Improve school attendance for girls between the ages of 9-20.
* To increase menstrual hygiene management knowledge to vulnerable adolescents.
* To increase self esteem of these young ladies.

**Project Implementation and Management Plan:**

1. The project wish is to raise money for the purchase of natural/organic reusable sanitary towels that are chemical free for young girls and ladies in rural Zambia.
2. We wish that the sanitary towels may be accompanied with underwear, bath soap and wash soap.
3. The foundation and partners will distribute these hygiene packages to various rural schools after having met with head teachers and school staff.
4. Foundation staff and a team from the Ministry of health shall conduct training on hygiene, and concurrent problems faced by the girls.

**Detailed Activities:**

Work with the state and schools to determine an actual demography of vulnerable girls/ladies and familiarize ourselves with the various schools.

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| 1. **Raising Funds** | Solicit for funds from various stakeholders. | Budget for the purchase of the kits and all logistics |  |
| 1. **Purchasing of the hygiene kit** | * Reusable pads * Underwear * Wash and bath soap | * staff induction on the project * mobilization of school management committee |  |
| 1. **Distribution and education** | * Menstrual hygiene management training * Detailed instruction for towel use. | * Distribution of the hygiene kit |  |
| 1. **Monitoring and Evaluation** | * conduct baseline survey. * Periodic staff planning and review meetings. | undertaking monitoring and evaluation visits. |  |

**Project impact:**

The project will directly benefit many vulnerable girls as it will have an impact on their personal hygiene and boost their self esteem. However, considering the fact that the first menstruation is horrifying and traumatic to girls as it occurs without their knowledge of it. With this project, menstrual hygiene and reproductive health issues will be handled, improving girls’ livelihood and school attendance. There will be a significant reduction in school dropouts as well as reduced vulnerability of the girls to early engagement in sex for income to acquire the hygiene kit.

Increased participation in school will eventually culminate into increased opportunities for income earning and dignified livelihood. This will further directly impact and reduce exposure to risks such as early pregnancy, childhood marriage, and HIV and AIDS contraction.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT:**

Female students face great challenges in terms of hygiene and sanitation. For girls who are menstruating, these problems compound the difficulties posed by the inability to afford sanitary towels as well as cultural taboos around menstruation. As a result, many girls miss on average four days of school every month which is over a month in a year, meaning they fall behind in class and sometimes even drop out of school altogether. This is an added challenge to the already existing problems that lead to the high dropout rate of female students in primary and secondary schools. The main problems faced by women and girls are, expense of sanitary pads, absenteeism where girls stay at home rather than attending school when menstruating, unhygienic ways to dry menstrual materials, inadequate waste disposal facilities, lack of privacy for changing menstrual materials, leakage from poor-quality protection materials, lack of resources for washing such as soap, limited education about the facts of menstruation, limited access to counseling and guidance, fear caused by cultural myths, embarrassment and low self esteem and the unsupportive attitudes of some men.