



Women Refugees' Impossible Dream is becoming a reality

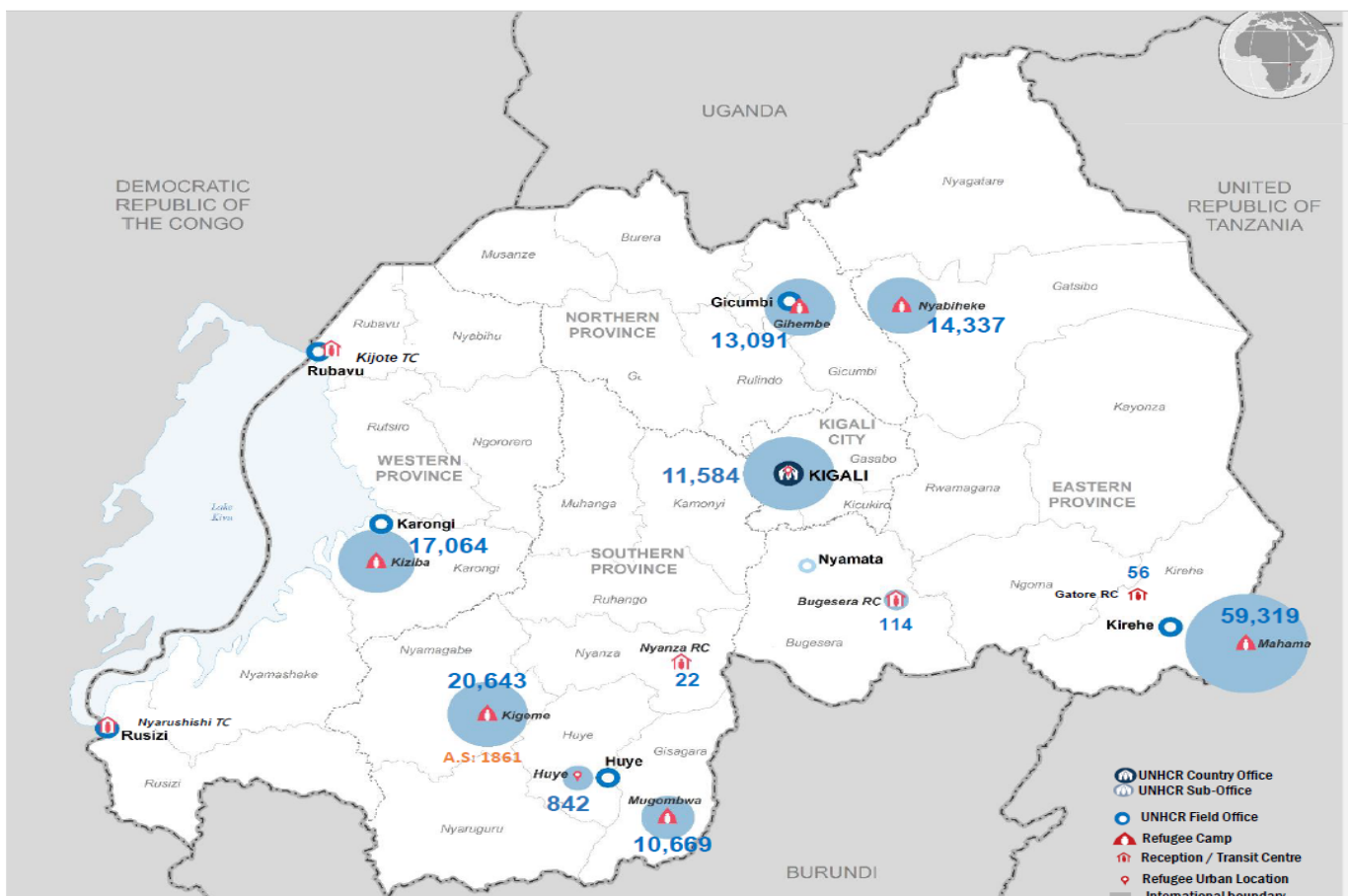
PRIDEnoSHAME is an initiative of Friends of Humanity to set-up a first production of sanitary pads in Kigali, Rwanda, by Women for Women mostly for refugees. The name UZIMA means "LIFE"

Rwanda

Population of Concern to UNHCR
as of 28th February 2019



Total Refugees in Rwanda: around 150'000 (52% from Democratic Rep. of Congo & ca. 48% from Burundi.)
Over 60'000 girls and women live in the camps



In a nutshell

The Uzima project, intends to bring affordable sanitary pads to **women and girls living in and outside of refugee camps**, in Rwanda. This project will be 100% sustainable and women led.

The problem

The thousands of girls and women live in Rwandan refugee camps because 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, money, 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 our initiative is to improve livelihoods of women and girls in and around the refugee camps in Rwanda. The specific goal of this project is to provide women and girls in and outside of the refugee camps 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 solution that the project seeks to achieve is based on the principle of:

- **affordability:** women with no means should be able to receive them free of charge.
- **environmentally sustainability:** the pads will be made of natural, 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.
- **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 and sales 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

The primary beneficiaries are the women living in the refugee camps. 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.

Budget/Investment:

The total budget of **500'000 US\$** includes:

- Purchasing of sanitary pads production-machine from India and its transport from India to Kigali.
- Raw material (calculated for the first 12 months of the operation) including cargo shipment from India to Kigali, Rwanda.
- Ensuring the rental of a small factory in Kigali.
- Ensuring furniture's and related manufacturing tools.
- Training material to be distributed among the young girls and women within and outside of refugee camps.
- Awareness raising in monthly sessions by 40 women.
- Management and supervision of production in the production place.
- Production, Administrative, Sales & Marketing, Distribution of san. pads, Transportation.
- Salaries and social tax.

The project aims to be self-sufficient from second half of 2023; 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 to duplicate the project managed by women cooperatives.

Mahama Refugee Camp



Kigeme Refugee Camp



Planned Activities: what has been done

- Set up of a production facility in Kigali, Rwanda.
- The best machinery and raw material from India were imported from there and are in the production place in Kigali in producing test samples for the market.
- The sanitary pads as a product, produced in Kigali, were accepted by the RSB (Rwanda Strategic board)
- The government supported the tax exemption for importing machine(s) and raw material from India.
- The production place was visited mid of April by the RSB. Green light to use the production line with some minor corrections was given.
- Uzima got the written production and sales certification 25th of May 2022.
- Set up organisation and factory management after Guido Durrer visited the production unity in July.
- Trained 10 women in the unity for use and maintenance of the machines.
- Formal contracting with employees was done related to the leadership of local Director (John)
- A sales woman has been hired to propose the project to different institutions and to visit rural communities.
- Local organization Rwanda Women Network has already accepted to represent Friends of Humanity and share the project UZIMA among the members.

Planned Activities: in process to be done

- Research on sourcing of raw material is in process. Raw material needed (in rolls) is not available in Rwanda. There are contacts in Eastern Africa, Egypt and Ethiopia to get the necessary high quality raw material.
- Goal is to find sanitary pads production machines within Eastern Africa, to avoid expensive transportation from India. Search in process as most of the Sanitary pad's producers bought their machines in China.
- Ensure regular and sustainable production:
 - a) Set up a solidarity network 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.
- Production Manual that includes detailed security measures is underway with the support of Polytechnic University of Kigali.
- Ensure sanitary pads are used and correctly disposed of:
 - a) Train a group of women (“influencers”) in the camp and outside among “the urban refugees”.
 - b) Raise awareness on use and disposal
 - c) Distribution for test started among students and women communities as Rwanda Women Network.
- Production, Administration, Sales & Marketing:
 - a) Informal marketing: Train women 10 to 20 women to sell pads outside the camps. 1 sales employee has already started in August and she will also be a trainer.

Partners

- UNHCR; UN Refugee Agency in Geneva and Rwanda are aware of the project.
- International NGO Organizations: they will be instrumental in buying the pads and distribute these to other refugee camps across Rwanda and other countries.
- Local organizations as Rwanda Women Network.
- Governmental institutions: they will run specific trainings on menstrual health & hygiene in camp and schools.
- Specialized companies as pharmacies in Rwanda

Our partner in Geneva: ^{giving}**women** is 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.

Responsibilities and contact persons

The overall Project-Responsibility is with Friends of Humanity (Graziella Zanoletti and Guido Durrer); the management and execution in Rwanda itself is supervised by John Uwayezu.

Friends of Humanity (FOH) is a Geneva-based non-profit organization supporting initiatives and projects in four key areas: Education and Training; Environmental Protection and Women Empowerment. 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, recognized by UN and Swiss government. Donations are deductibles.

Contact name and number

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Happy Women having received Sanitary napkins



WELCOME ON BOARD IN THIS EXCITING AND MEANINGFUL PROJET