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### DELIVERING WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE SERVICES IN AN UNCERTAIN ENVIRONMENT

## Girls for Girls Programme, Kenya

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#### BRIEFING PAPER 1807

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*Friends of Londiani (FOL) in partnership with Girl Guide and Girl Scout Leaders from around the world are working with schools and communities in the Districts of Londiani and Kipkelion to enable girls to remain in school. Girls often miss days of school due to lack of access to affordable sanitary products, and lack of sanitation facilities in schools. The community has identified that its lack of ability to address this simple issue leads to girls leaving school at an early age (at a disproportionate rate than boys) and leaves girls without skills necessary to participate in money-earning activities later in life, and unable to make informed decisions about their future. The Girls for Girls Programme includes a menstrual health hygiene education programme.*

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### Introduction

In May 2010, an international group of experienced Girl Guide and Girl Scout leaders and trainers were meeting in London exploring the topic of community leadership. One of the participants, a young woman Evelyn from Kenya, was denied entry to the UK at the last moment. The group then set up a virtual discussion panel, so that Evelyn could participate. During the discussion, the leaders asked Evelyn “If there was one thing we could do to assist girls in education, what would it be?”. The answer from Evelyn shocked all in the room “provide access to sanitary products so no girl ever has to miss a day of school”.

And so *Girls for Girls* (G4G) was born – though it was quickly discovered that this issue would require a multi-pronged response. This response has been developed by Friends of Londiani (FOL), working with the communities of the Kipkelion and Londiani Districts and Girl Guide and Girl Scout leaders from across the world. Friends of Londiani (FOL) are a Kenyan non-governmental organisation working in the Kipkelion and Londiani Districts since 2002. FOL’s mission is to work in partnership with the people of these Districts to develop and complete sustainable community projects to enable the people to achieve an improved quality of life based on their values and become the authors of their own development.

### The issue

Girls attendance at school is impacted by their monthly period in a number of ways. The conditions of most of the toilets at schools in Londiani are very basic, unhygienic and without doors. Where there are toilets, they are pit latrines – with varying standards of effectiveness. Many do not have water supplied for washing (personal hygiene and for clothing). There are also often not enough toilets for the number of pupils at school. This means girls often do not go to school when they have their period due to the lack of facilities and embarrassment. Many girls do not also have the means to purchase sanitary products, or live in remote areas where modern sanitary products are not readily available. Again, without affordable access to sanitary products on a regular basis, girls are not able to attend school. The issues here are about enough money to purchase products if and when they are available. In many households, accessing funds means asking the father – which is culturally challenging, and not always met with the same level of priority in tight household budgets.



When girls miss up to one week in four, it does not take long for them to fall behind, and potentially drop out of school all together. A girl without an education becomes more vulnerable to early marriage, teenage pregnancy, diseases (including HIV/AIDS) and has limited life choices.

### **The solution**

Providing options for sanitary protection will ‘open doors’ for these girls – as they will have the opportunity for continuous and complete education through to the end of at least secondary school. We believe no girl should ever miss a day of school because of lack of access to affordable, hygienic sanitary products.

The Girls for Girls programme seeks to provide access to a variety of cheaper sanitary products in the community along with sufficient and hygienic latrines and facilities for girls.

It is coupled with a health education programme, which is currently supported by FOL in over 70 schools. The program has been jointly developed and delivered for the past 2.5 years by an international team working with young women from wider Kenya and the community. The shared learning opportunities from girls in other countries with the young women of Londiani have been insightful. For example, young women in Lebanon after visiting Kenya with G4G have developed an education and fundraising program. In July 2012, they travelled to Ireland to share this learning with young women in Ireland. During this time they set up a Skype connection with young women in the G4G program in Kenya.

In order to address the question of funds, so that girls can have the means to purchase their choice of sanitary products, income generation projects are being explored with the schools.

The Girls for Girls Programme is designed to address Millennium Development Goals for health, education, and gender equity by providing basic sanitary products and proper facilities so that girls can pursue education after puberty.

By continuing in education girls are given more opportunities for their future, and the ability to make informed decisions and choices.

### **How the programme works**

The aim of the Girls for Girls Programme is a 3 part programme which is integrated into FOL’s Healthy School Programme. The 3 parts include:

- Hygiene/ health education;
- Infrastructure development and
- Economic empowerment.

#### **Hygiene/health education:**

FOL organises “Train the Trainer” workshops for teachers from the Girls for Girls school. These teachers in turn deliver the Girls for Girls educational programme in their schools over a period of 12 months. The programme is modular and contains 10 modules on Health and Hygiene. These are as follows:

1. Module 1: Getting to know myself
2. Module 2: Female body and menstruation
3. Module 3: Personal growth
4. Module 4: Independent decision making
5. Module 5: Personal Hygiene and menstruation
6. Module 6: Personal Hygiene
7. Module 7: Gender and HIV
8. Module 8: Safe relationships
9. Module 9: Me at school
10. Module 10: Me at home



Excerpt from Girls for Girls Manual – how to make a sanitary towel



Excerpt from Girls for Girls Manual – Sodis Disinfection

**Infrastructure development**

FOL has worked with the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation, and local schools to design a girl's latrine and washroom structure. This is supplied with water from a rainwater tank which ensures water flows throughout the building. Each building has 10 latrines and 2 washrooms for girls.

When the first building was designed feedback was given to FOL by the girls themselves, and modifications to the design were then made.

The current design is very popular in Londiani and Kipkelion and FOL continue to implement it in Girls for Girls schools.



Latrines and washrooms under construction



Latrines and washrooms completed

**Economic empowerment:**

The Girls for Girls Training Programme includes 2 modules on economic empowerment

1. Module 11: Financial opportunities
2. Module 12: Income generating activities

Girls are given basic skills to enable them to understand business and how it works. The school sets up an income generating project to enable it to sustain the programme.

## The principles of the Girls for Girls Programme

The programme has 6 core principles including:

1. **Sustainability – year on year (for a lifetime)** - FOL wants a sustainable solution to this challenge for girls. Sustainability is core to FOL's work in Kenya. Girls for Girls focuses on sustainable solutions that aim to raise awareness, address short and long-term needs, empower girls through skill building sessions, and increase capacity of girls to participate in income generating projects for long-term solutions
2. **Educational opportunities – information not myths** - A lot of myths surround hygiene information and practice in Londiani. The Girls for Girls programme is a factual one and helps to alleviate these myths.
3. **Health, hygiene and sanitation – individuals, homes, and facilities** - Coupled with the Healthy Schools Programme FOL works in partnership with the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation to build latrines and washrooms for schools.
4. **Cost-effective solutions – choice of alternatives** - FOL has a partnership with Huru International to provide a low cost alternative for sanitary towels. FOL has also visited other similar projects and the girls have learnt how to make their own sanitary towels. The aim of the programme is to give girls a choice of products available to them.
5. **Environmentally friendly – minimise waste** - The programme aims to provide environmentally friendly solutions to the challenge the girls face.
6. **Financial empowerment – no embarrassment in asking for money each month** - In Kenya the finances of the family are usually controlled by the males. This means girls must ask their fathers or brothers for money for basic sanitary products. This in turn leads to low self-esteem and embarrassment for many girls. By providing girls with skills in income generation and economic empowerment they will become independent and not be dependent on others to finance their sanitary requirements. The programme tackles the root cause of the problem as well which is lack of income and finance.

## The pilot of the Girls for Girls Programme

- 4 schools were selected for the pilot programme including 2 Secondary Schools (Ndubusat Girls Secondary, Londiani Academy Girls School) and 2 Primary Schools (Central Primary and Londiani Boys (which is a mixed school))
- 11 Facilitators from 6 countries ran a 3 day session for 50 participants in Londiani in February 2011.
- Participants included teachers from the 4 pilot schools, Ministry of Health Representatives, Ministry of Education Representative.
- A Local core team set up to coordinate pilot in partnership with FOL.
- On-going monitoring of pilot schools continued throughout 2011 and feedback sessions were held with girls and teachers throughout the year.
- Contact was made with Huru International, an NGO that manufactures reusable sanitary towels in Kenya, and these were distributed to all 4 pilot schools in September 2011.
- All 4 schools have completed each of the 12 modules including trialling the Huru International reusable sanitary towel kits.
- The overall feedback is very positive about the programme, and the pilot schools want to include the remainder of the girls in their schools in the programme going forward.
- The District Health Management Team, District Education Officer, and Public Health Office in Kipkelion and Londiani have supported the programme, and have asked that FOL rolls it out across the District.



**Girls receive their Huru kits in Central Primary School**

**Girls receive their Huru kits in Londiani Boys School.**

### **Update since initial pilot**

- Due to the success of the pilot programme a further 17 schools were trained in the Girls for Girls Programme in March 2012. These schools continue to work on the educational programme in conjunction with the FOL Healthy School Programme.
- Schools must have registered for the Healthy Schools Programme with a HECA committee in place, and attended at least one HECA training before they are eligible to begin the Girls for Girls Programme.
- Infrastructure audits have been carried out for these schools, and these will feed into the overall budget and planning for the Girls for Girls Programme.
- A major review has been conducted to shape the program for the next phase of development.

### **FOL's Healthy Schools Programme**

The Healthy Schools Programme is a joint partnership between Friends of Londiani, School Management, staff and students, the local Ministry of Education and the local Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation. It utilises the concept underlying the World Health Organisation's initiative of the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA).

The aim is to reduce environmental risks to children's health that arise from the settings where they live, learn and play by providing knowledge, increasing will, mobilizing resources, and catalysing urgent action. This is achieved through a programme that provides training for teachers and increases students' awareness of environmental health issues through classroom studies. A student HECA club is formed in each school which aims to transfer knowledge into positive environmental action in the school and also in the wider community.

Based on a seven step cyclical programme, schools work towards one of the three levels of Bronze, Silver and Gold. Upon attainment of the criteria of that level, schools are awarded a HECA flag to be flown with pride and as a symbol for all showing that particular school is a healthy place in which to learn, work and play in. The flag is renewed every two years through a visit from the Public Health Office and the school can continue to work towards the next level and/or maintaining the level they have achieved.

The Healthy Schools Programme operates in Pre-schools, Primary schools, Secondary schools, Poly-technical schools and training centres.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

Monitoring and Evaluation is an integral part of all of FOL's programme lifecycles and in this way, the relevance to the needs of the community is at all times apparent. The implementation, monitoring and evaluation of each project will be clearly defined at the start of each programme. FOL staff in Kenya will coordinate this intervention and will maintain good communication with all partners throughout.

FOL uses a Results Framework as its Monitoring and Evaluation tool. Each objective has a set of activities and indicators which will be monitored as the programme progresses whether or not they have been achieved in the timeframe as set. This monitoring will be done by both the partners involved and

FOL staff. The Healthy Schools and Girls for Girls programmes have monitoring and evaluation as intrinsic activities to be completed by the communities/committees, which will be included in their annual reports.

FOL understands the difficulties in measuring behaviour change and although the process of collecting quantitative data is important, FOL is introducing qualitative analysis of conceptual variables and other social research methodology. This will be done annually through focus groups and the partnership seminar.

### **Impact**

Through the evaluations conducted with the pilot schools, there is evidence that the G4G Programme is beginning to deliver real change. This is through both the original aim – of girls not missing school during their monthly periods, but also in other ways. The issue of girls’ rights to sanitation has been referred to in a number of public forums by education officials, elders and community leaders. This issue was rarely ever spoken about in public prior to the programme. FOL is repeatedly asked to extend the programme by girls, parents, teachers, health practitioners and government officials – a testimony to the value it is seen to bring.

The girls themselves report a range of benefits including more confidence as they can now attend school more regularly without embarrassment, greater knowledge about their bodies and hygiene and access to better infrastructure. However, the quote that sums up perhaps one of the greatest impacts comes from a girl in a secondary school in a remote area *“before doing G4G, I didn’t think girls mattered, I didn’t think I mattered. I thought boys were much better than girls. But now I know that I matter. I know that I am important.”*

### **Next steps**

- Continue to supporting the schools on the programme implementation and as resources allow, extend the program to other schools within the Healthy Schools Program, .
- Partnership with HURU to ensure an on-going supply of the packs, and shared learnings on the implementation of the educational program
- Promoting the programme at events across the District both for schools and the Communities
- Working with the international G4G supporters network to secure the funding, resources, programme development and implementation support needed
- Continue to develop the monitoring and evaluation framework

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