

## **PROJECT FOR PEACE SUMMER 2021.**

Previously called "Goat Breeding Economic Sustainability Project"

### **Empowering Refugee Women To Self-Sustainability Through Tailoring.**

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Following our application, the original project meant to be implemented this summer 2021 in Kyangwali Refugee Camp was a "Goat Breeding Project." The initial change to tailoring upon arrival in Uganda and the Refugee camp was due to the recent land redistribution in the Camp by the Office of Prime Minister (OPM) to meet the increasing numbers of refugees in Uganda that affected our targeted site of project implementation. Thanks to the team's flexibility and the hosting organization, we opened room for more options that would equally or even have more positive impact on the community sooner or in future. We first looked into a Poultry Project as the means to fight hunger and improve diet among refugee Children, as it is a growing challenge among school going children, mostly nursery and primary section in the refugee camp. The Challenge remained the long delays in the placing and receiving orders (both Chicks and adult chicken) specifically for layers.

For our project implementation, we decided to do Tailoring targeting women (targeting the poor, widowed and school dropouts as well as others interested) as the means of empowering Refugee Women and building as well as supporting homes towards Self-Sustainability through equipping women with skills in tailoring in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement, Western Region Kikuube district Uganda.

Prior to starting classes, we hosted a few meetings with the first group interested where we registered the first class (September-February). Since the starting class graduates Eleven students, we target at least 22 women to graduate a year within the refugee community every year. According to the feedback from our hired tailoring teacher in meetings, it should take about four to six months maximum for students to learn basic and improved tailoring skills to start working on their own or say to graduate in a tailoring class. He suggested that given the lessons (both theory and practice are continuous for about three to four days a week, students can graduate in about four months.

In class with some students that cannot read and write as well as some possible few slow learners, graduating the entire class meant extending the time to six months to favor all students and host a same time graduation. This also required extension in time taking classes from Monday to Thursday at 8:00Am-1:00PM, and the teacher's extra effort to prepare special accommodation for those that cannot read and write. This also put a regulation on student recruitment that no students can be join the class a week after the course starts to avoid delays and over repeated lessons since the program is timeframe.

Considerations other challenges for student-mothers came with responsibilities in their families that require them to keep balance while they attend school the next six months. Since lunch is not at the tailoring school, they chose morning hours as most of them are parents and children that render service to their specific families. Giving importance to activities in their homes, the choice for Monday to Thursday is to ensure that classes are taken half a week a week and the rest of the

week left for them to spare time to attend to their own routines in their homes including farming activities and keep days of prayers aside for their specific religions.

Our sustainability plan was best on both the organization's help to keep the project going after we leave ability of the project as well to raise some funds as the school goes on. Since we both cannot stay to watch over the project, it is handed over to the Coburwas branch in the refugee camp upon fully establishment to watch over and run it as one of their projects.

To raise money, while the Morning hours of the day are spared for classes, the afternoon hours are specifically for registered skilled workers who will use machines to earn money from which they give 40% of their earning to the project for both saving and machine maintenance. Also since there is ready market from the surrounding schools around the refugee camp, the primary focus in their lessons include making shirts, shorts, dresses, sportswear, skirts and then get to more complex designs in the future. The expectation is that in the first three months of learning, the project would start making some of these fabrics for both orders from schools and for sale.

### **Course of the project Implementation and Challenges.**

#### *Left the US to Kampala:*

Jephte Left the U.S first and took time to meet the hosting organization and make a few preparations preparation for the on-ground project implementation. This included visiting and updating the hosting organization headquarters in Kampala as well as well as the branch in the refugee camp where the project was to be conducted soon when Ian arrives.

#### *Left for Kyangwali:*

Received Ian upon his arrival at the airport, took his covid test and left for the hotel and preparations for the meeting at the Coburwas (Hosting organization) headquarters in Kampala Uganda. Stayed for the whole weekend to pick our credit card held at Stanbic bank at the airport in Entebbe and left for the refugee camp on Tuesday.

#### *The lockdown:*

The lockdown in Uganda started on the 8<sup>th</sup> June, putting temporary restrictions on in Uganda restricting any movements cross districts. A week later the total lock down was placed, that restricted even not only transportation of people, any form of gathering activities as well as shops and markets from operating in the whole country. Before the lockdown was lifted, Ian's return flight to the US was due. This left the implementation of the project with one on ground and one in the U.S sharing updates on the project and playing possible roles apart.

#### *Challenges we dealt with during our project:*

Among the challenges we faced were changes from project to project due to the changes in the refugee camp. Originally in 2020, our project was implementation was goat breeding which was to take place in the refugee camp and well favored by the vast piece of land the organization (COBURWAS) still owned at the time. A year later Summer 2021, most of this land had been already redistributed by the Office of Prime Minister in the settlements to shelter the growing

number of refugees that entered the refugee camp. As a result, we had to switch from goat breeding to tailoring, a project that needed funding to implement in the refugee camp.

Increased travel and covid-19 expenses:

These were both flight bookings and covid-19 tests at the airports, both departures and arrivals required in the countries that we traveled through and finally Uganda where we traveled to. We both booked our flights almost in the months of our travels and faced the expensive covid tests at the airport in the United States and later upon arrival to and leaving Uganda that affected the budget.

Delayed funds, 2-3 weeks:

Since we had limited time to implement the project, every day and week we had counted, if we were to finish the project in time. We also needed to access the funds as soon as possible in the need amounts. Working in the village in the refugee camp where no banks were accessible, we choose to transfer and receive the money through Coburwas. This however delayed our funds for about two weeks and 3 days to get the projects money. While the funds delayed, one team member's (Ian) return flight date approached, which meant working on the project while in different places. left the on-ground Project implementation in hands of only one participant (Jephte) while sharing the updates on every step made to finish the project.



