



Together Women Rise: Interim Progress Report: May 1 – October 31, 2023

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**Grant Background:** The MoonCatcher Project (MCP) was the featured grantee in April 2023 and received a grant of \$43,000 from Together Women Rise (TWR). MCP sought funding to supply eight sewing cooperatives in Africa (Malawi, Uganda, and Kenya) with sufficient materials to produce 7,000 kits for school-age girls toward our overall goal of serving 15,000 girls in 2023-2024. We employ the following strategy: provide employment and training to liaisons and tailors; deliver kits to help keep girls in school; provide teachers with our health curriculum - encourage them to support girls' needs daily; raise school and community awareness of the importance of supporting girls around menstruation; educate teachers, girls, and boys to maximize impact; source materials locally; and replicate systems through training and adaptation of available materials.

Our goals and objectives remain unchanged since the grant request was submitted. We anticipate surpassing our objectives by April 2024.

The beneficiaries of this grant are the (approximately) 7,000 girls who will receive the Kits and education regarding menstrual management and reproductive health, as well as the local women who work in fully equipped sewing cooperatives established by MCP. This work provides the women (and one man) with a means to make an income as tailors.

The intended outcome for this project was to produce and distribute 7,000 menstrual management kits to schoolgirls, along with our menstrual and reproductive health curriculum.

**Program Update:** During the period of May 1 – October 31, 2023, The MoonCatcher Project spent a total of \$51,074 on materials and supplies for MoonCatcher Kits in Africa. Our coops produced 17,251 kits during that same period. Delivery is an ongoing process and most of these kits have been distributed to schoolgirls along with our menstrual and reproductive health curriculum.

## Project Outcomes

05/01-10/31/2023	Budgeted Expenses	Actual Expenditures	Predicted number of Kits	Actual Kits Produced
Malawi	\$43,000.00 (total for the year)	\$25,424		7,450
Uganda		\$17,465		4,100
Kenya		\$ 8,185		5,701
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$51,074</b>	<b>7,500</b>	<b>17,251</b>



Students at the Chingadza Primary School, in Malawi holding their new MoonCatcher Kits and calendars. October 2023.



A student at the Holy Family Namayumba School in Uganda volunteers to demonstrate how to track one's menstrual cycle. October 2023.



Students at the Tido Primary School, near Kisumu Kenya, hold up their new MoonCatcher Kits and calendars.  
October 2023

### Unexpected challenges in 2023

This year, one of our sewing cooperatives in Malawi (the Chituka Cooperative) was disbanded due to leadership problems in that cooperative. While we were sad to withdraw our program from Chituka, girls in that area continue to receive MoonCatcher Kits as our other tailors have increased production. Going forward, we will maintain only two cooperatives in Malawi, and hopefully see those groups expand their number of tailors in the future.

### Growth in 2023

This year, MCP Board Member, Agnes Pala-Bukhala has spent a lot of time in Kenya expanding and improving our program there. New tailors and a new teacher have been added and are working together with Jacky Okoth in Kisumu and Ahero to increase production. Agnes has been negotiating with local government officials toward establishing a partnership with them – since Kenya’s official policy is for all girls to have access to menstrual supplies.



Ellie and Helen (a local Rotary Club member and MCP supporter) visited Kisumu, Kenya this year to map out plans for expansion there. March 2023.

The Kitale Women’s prison, located north of Kisumu, is home to many young women of school age who are incarcerated for prostitution. Most of them are actually victims of sexual exploitation and assault. An ongoing volunteer education program allows inmates to complete their high school education. We are proud that our newest partner Justine Mwanzi, visited this institution in September 2023 to provide MoonCatcher Kits and reproductive health education to these students. (Photo below)



**New Staff**

In August 2023, MCP was happy to hire our new part-time Assistant Director, Charlotte Mack Barrett (photo below). Charlotte is a long-time supporter of MCP and a former board member. She has traveled to Malawi twice with Ellie and looks forward to visiting the other countries where we work. Charlotte brings enthusiasm, creative ideas, and managerial skills to her new role.



## **New Connections with Together Women Rise Chapters**

We have been able to increase production and grow significantly because of the Together Women Rise grant. Since April, MCP has been happy to form new connections with Together Women Rise chapters across the country. Our local group has been very supportive, and several MCP volunteers and board members attended their April dinner, with Ellie and another MCP supporter attending in May. The Rise members in Fort Collins, Colorado have been cutting Tyvek for us. Ellie spoke to a group in Boulder, Colorado in July. MoonCatcher Kits are now being made by groups in Arizona, Connecticut and Minnesota.