

International Global Grant

Project Name: Vuka uGovuke Campaign (translates to “arise and protect” in siSwati)

Location: Eswatini, Africa

Host: Rotary Club of Mbabane-Mbuluzi, **Cooperating Organization:** Govuka Group

International Host: Rotary Club of Petaluma Sunrise

Club Pledges Needed:

Total amount of matching club support pledges needed for a Global Grant is: \$11000-\$13000

Project description:

The project will fiscally support a 15 high school Educational and Assistance program, providing targeted and reliable HIV, anti Tuberculosis, and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI's) information to all first year High School students. Unaware adolescent girls who have sex with older men (called “blessers”) are at a 5x higher risk of HIV infection in Eswatini. Sexual exploitation and subsequently the transmitting of STI's and early pregnancies are significant problems in Eswatini. This is due to high poverty rates, food shortages and high unemployment in the country that make blessers (who prey on high school women by offering food, clothing, money as a seemingly attractive alternative lifestyle to their high school lives. Once they are pregnant these women are dumped back into the communities they came from and of course the schools will not take them back. Prior anti HIV programs in the country have not been effective at targeting these young women.

Current Statistics show:

- Young women have an HIV rate over 33%
- The country of Eswatini overall has a HIV and HIV-tuberculosis rate of 27.3%
- Life expectancy in Eswatini is 61 years of age.

This proposed program was preceded by a five school Pilot program done by Govukain (2022) that developed the training methods to be used in this project. This includes using trained 18 to 22-year-old peer educators to deliver the knowledge and implement this program at the schools.

This program also provides an inclusive referral program to connect adolescents to local health and professional development (job) opportunities designed to transform aspirations. It will provide targeted reliable life skill benefits as alternatives to the risks of intergenerational relationships.

Followup

An annual 5 year data analysis/ and results survey followup for the 15 high schools in Eswatini is part of this proposal. These will be done to TRF requirements by the host Rotary clubs involved and the Govuka group. Govuka group is a local Eswatini Cooperating Agency headed by Philile Shongwe a **World Peace Fellow** endorsed by our district (in 2019) who has gone on to create this non-profit organization and create this project.

Support:

If enough District fiscal support is gained to move ahead, this will be District 5130's first district-endorsed World Peace Fellow project in its history. Please consider providing support for this worthy project.

For additional information and to pledge club and individual support, contact:

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