Safeguarding Endorois people’s knowledge and ecosystems via an inclusive and autonomous governance protocol

**Description of the project:** This project helps the discriminated Endorois people around Lake Bogoria articulate their own priorities and procedures for the conservation of their natural resources by developing a Biocultural Community Protocol (BCP). It documents the ancestral knowledge of Endorois women and men on their ecosystems and provides proactive responses to climate impacts, among other threats. It guides the community on collective engagement with external stakeholders on access, use and management of their endogenous resources, based on the legal framework of the Nagoya Protocol. The elected Endorois Welfare Council, representing 17 communities (up to 60,000 people), and respecting gender balance, contributes to the protection of genetic and biological resources, including the neighboring ecosystems.

**Climate impact:** The BCP ensures the use of indigenous knowledge to launch initiatives for climate adaptation to droughts - and unlock multiple socio-economic benefits. The community has documented their traditional beliefs and indigenous knowledge and thus, the BCP is an intergenerational negotiation tool to address collaboration with external actors and provide solutions that safeguard and complement traditional knowledge for climate resilience and other key environmental issues.

**Gender impact:** The BCP adopts an inclusive strategy where women were included in leading positions in the governance structures and have become active agents in environmental conservation. Women participated in the negotiations and articulation of their rights, culture and traditions for natural resource management. The BCP clearly maps out women’s age-set, with separate representation of female youth and elderly, and recognizes their roles and rights with regards to conservation. Capacity-building also enhanced their understanding of policy, legal and institutional frameworks.

**Scalability / replicability:** The BCP strengthens the community’s capacity to use traditional knowledge to achieve sustainable natural resource management, and it aims to influence other Indigenous communities in similar circumstances, having positive impacts on neighboring territories. Such methodology can be replicated in many endangered ecosystems. The Endorois people are able to protect their rights and knowledge via collective engagement with external stakeholders. As a result, with a more cohesive society, they can avert possible conflict situations among members of the community arising from declining natural resources.

**Spotless Dame - combating menstrual hygienic poverty while reducing plastic waste**

**Description of the project:** This project addresses the interconnected challenges of plastic waste, extreme poverty, unhygienic practices during menstruation, and sustainable livelihoods. It enables adolescent girls and community women to lead healthy lives by breaking myths and taboos surrounding menstruation and creating awareness about healthy practices. More than 6,500 Mera Pads - reusable cloth pads made from bamboo - have been distributed. Their production and sales have created new jobs for 25 women, improving the livelihoods of their families. Over 7,500 women and girls have been trained in menstrual hygiene through 92 Workshops in 30 villages across 8 districts of Rajasthan. Awareness raising programs were also organised for boys and men to break the cycle of menstrual discrimination.

**Climate impact:** Disposable sanitary pads result in the unsustainable discharge of millions of tonnes of plastic waste all over the world, which are nearly non biodegradable. One woman using disposable pads and tampons for menstrual hygiene will generate around 150 kg of plastic waste during her entire life, with an estimated carbon footprint of 900 kg CO2. This project has thus far supported 1,626 women with 6,304 reusable cloth pads, saving 31.19 kg of plastic waste and substantially reducing carbon emissions. Gender impact: Access to safe menstrual hygiene can be a matter of life and death. Patriarchal discrimination of menstruating women still prevails in India. With affordable, sustainable alternative pads, this project has created jobs, improved the life of 1,626 women and raised the capacity of 7,500 girls and women on menstrual hygiene management. Programs to sensitise boys and men break gender taboos. Pragati Sakhis - environmental ambassadors - are selected to educate and empower women in their communities on environment and health. Scalability / replicability: Started in one village in 2015, Spotless Dame has already been replicated in 30 locations from 8 districts. Pragati Sakhis - environmental ambassadors- endorse the role of multiplicators and ensure up-scaling. The business model based on a sustainable production with local materials and local people is easy to replicate. By 2030, the non-profit organisation aims to provide 1 million women with Mera Pads, creating sustainable jobs for at least 1,000 women.