



Commitment Award Projects 2020

Project 1: Komal Ramdey, Nafisa Islam Fariba, Bisma Iftekhhar

“Capacity Building and Behavioral Change Interventions for Holistic Menstrual Hygiene Management” (Bangladesh)

Current Brandt School students Komal, Nafisa, and Fariba have created the project “Capacity Building and Behavioral Change Interventions for Holistic Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM)”. There are nearly 24 million menstruators in Bangladesh, majority of whom have no knowledge and facilities to manage their menstruation hygienically and with dignity, having grave consequences on their personalities. Their idea is to advocate for safe and hygienic menstrual practices and improving the status of MHM in Bangladesh by targeting the most vulnerable groups starting schools, garment factory workers & Rohingya refugees. Three aspects will be covered during the project providing an end-to-end solution: breaking the silence, menstrual hygiene management (practices and access to absorbents), and safe disposal of menstrual waste. The project is based on partnerships and capacity building of relevant institutions and this project ensures sustainability, using volunteers and existing infrastructure with an advocacy component for mainstreaming MHM in national policies.

Project 2: Carolina Reis

“FACT – Form, Articulate, Connect and Transform” (Brazil)

The project “FACT – Form, Articulate, Connect and Transform”, created by Brandt School student Carolina Reis, gives high school youth the opportunity to connect with the public sphere, discovering their potential to impact it as a vocation and professional opportunity. Carried out through partnerships with public high schools and the State Department of Education, it is a training program in three stages: (1) advertising and selection through public professions fairs; (2) online training with mentoring sessions; (3) immersion and challenge phase with institutional visits, lectures and a Public Service Solutions Hackathon. Through a dynamic and engaged process, FACT aims to form and articulate young people, connecting them with decision makers to transform their realities. In the short term, it will influence their future careers, adding the public sector as a possibility of impact; help to build a school culture that prizes public services; and call public actors to reconnect with citizens. In the long term, the project may stimulate innovative and committed public servants.

Project 3: Athar Farooq

“Mera Hunar Mera Rozgar, My Skill is My Business” (Pakistan)

The world will be going towards a new normal after COVID-19, presenting many SMEs opportunities they did not have before. Athar Farooq created “Mera Hunar Mera Rozgar, My Skill is My Business” to harness those opportunities, provide work from home and to establish retail outlets for skilled and needy individuals or families. The association shall provide digital and social media help to establish and expand the income stream and increase the customer inflow and branding of the business. The project’s main goal is to empower the socially and economically marginalized segment of the society and create a business cycle to expand the beneficiary numbers.



Project 4: Sarah Filippi-Field, Kyaw Si Thu

“Yangon Playmakers: A Community Hub by and for Dagon Seikkan Township Youth” (Myanmar)

Brandt School students Sarah Filippi-Field and Kyaw Si Thu are the creators of “Yangon Playmakers”, a project that seeks to transform an abandoned lot into a community play hub for youth living in No. 93 Ward, Dagon Seikkan Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Currently, neighborhood youth have no stimulating, safe space to play. Studies show that access to play contributes to children’s physical, psychological, and social wellbeing. By offering a physical play space as well as interactive, community-led programs throughout the year, Yangon Playmakers will positively impact the lives of over 300 youth. The project utilizes a participatory approach where youth and other residents contribute to the site design and construction, therefore also contributing to community empowerment.

Project 5: Esteban Rayo

“Small diving initiative in hands of indigenous family in southern Chile” (Chile)

Esteban Rayo from the Brandt School, created a project aimed to empower and leverage a small-scale diving tourism initiative. The activity is inserted into an indigenous community (Huilliche people) in a remote coastal area in the south of Chile, known as Condor Cove. The community faces many challenges from a new environmental legislation. These new rules protect forest and marine areas, but at the same time limit the traditional livelihoods of this community. Through diving gear investment and training, the project aims to help this community diversify their economic resources and give the protected areas and the Huilliche community a sustainable future.

Project 6: Berenice Munoz

“Cocina Tradicional Rocafuerte – Traditional Cooking to combat extreme poverty and gender vulnerability” (Ecuador)

Brandt School alumna Berenice Munoz created “Cocina Tradicional Rocafuerte” as a way to combat extreme poverty and gender vulnerability. It is a project looking to build a Traditional Cooking Restaurant in the California-Rocafuerte community that is owned by women in situations of socio-economic vulnerability. The restaurant aims to offer the community’s women, who are living under the poverty line, in vulnerability and unemployment an opportunity to start their own formal economic activity. They will be able to make use of their abilities to strengthen empowerment, but also reduce levels of vulnerability and extreme poverty through generating a regular income. Moreover, the project looks to promote a model of circular economy where the products used in their restaurant will come from their own gardens and parcels motivating the use of local products and resources.

Project 7: Sonia Ran, Mohammad Shaklab, Olivia Munson

“ZuSamen e.V.” (Germany)

Brandt School student Sonia Ran, along with partners Olivia Munson and Mohammad Shaklab, created ZuSamen e.V., a social impact community agriculture space centered on youth empowerment, intercultural awareness, and food literacy. Acting as both an urban farm and a youth



educational program, ZuSamen e.V. brings youth together from all over Berlin in an intercultural exchange with the aim of producing local, sustainable produce. The youth programs not only teach youth about food systems, sustainability, and social justice, but also brings together teenagers from different neighborhoods and backgrounds who might otherwise not have the opportunity to interact with each other at a young age. It also benefits the local community by providing affordable, locally-grown produce and donating produce to local homeless shelters.

Project 8: Daniela Sota Valdivia

“Yupayta Yachasunchis: Increasing Knowledge” (Peru)

The project “Yupayta Yachasunchis: Increasing Knowledge”, created by alumna Daniela Sota Valdivia, aims to strengthen math and language skills of Quechua speaking children aged 7 to 11 years old in the indigenous community of Ccatcca. Quechua speaking children have long received poor quality education and due to COVID-19 they are now being deprived of it entirely. The government’s home-schooling program has been developed for Spanish speakers only and it is not broadcasted across local radios in rural communities. To help children cope with this situation, we aim to strengthen their skills through a weekly radio educational program. Thus, we will contribute to narrowing the gap between rural and urban education while also helping to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infections by promoting this type of education as an option to reduce social contact.

Project 9: Chukwudi Johnpaul Okolo

“The Village School Book-Mobile Library” (Nigeria)

Village Schools Book-Mobile Library (VSBML) aims to stimulate the minds and improve the literacy of poor and disadvantaged children in identified villages. It adds to the efforts of state actors to provide books driven around by a mobile bicycle or van while the facilitators guide children on a general reading session and later a Q & A to assess attention. Other children who are better capable can borrow from the books for their weekly reading and return them later. Each school shall form Readers’ Clubs to ensure continuity because each will be visited weekly. Community ownership and volunteerism shall promote this and is the major strength of this project. Studies have proven this as successful in the US and Germany as well as other European Countries and we are glad to deploy it. The project learns from the German model in Munich.

Project 10: Consuelo Fuentes

“Women Force” (Chile)

The mobile app “Woman Force”, a concept created by Brandt School student Consuelo Fuentes, provides alternative help to women who suffer from domestic violence and who may be exposed to dangerous situations. Through a panic button they can alert the police to receive timely relief, in an effort to combat the startling figure of 3,800 femicides that were registered in Latin America in 2018. Besides a panic button, the app will also offer data cloud storage, where women can save evidence of the violence they experience for subsequent legal claims against their aggressors. This project is an alternative source to government agencies, which mostly encourage reporting, which is not an accessible solution for all women.



Project 11: Abhishek Raj

“Food serving with Banana Leaf Technology” (Germany)

Abhishek Raj, a current student of the Brandt School, has come up with a way to use Banana Leaf Technology, as an alternative to plastic, in our everyday lives. The inventor of the technology is a 21 year old scientist from the state of Tamil Nadu, India. Banana Leaf Technology preserves the leaves for up to 3 years, to create durable products that can serve as an alternative to plastic without the use of any chemicals. There are 7-10 biotechnological processes involved in enhancing a banana leaf. The cells are preserved such that the natural components of the leaves remain intact. Preserved leaves can resist extreme temperatures and hold more weight. The manufacturing cost of these plates and cups is very low, and they can ultimately be used as manure or fodder. The processed leaves are 100% biodegradable, healthy, humanfriendly, completely eco-friendly and are a viable replacement for disposables.

Project 12: Nazira Turarova

“Be on the bRight side!” (Kyrgyzstan)

Brandt School student, Nazira Turarova, created “Be on the bRight side!” to help with the problem of road safety in the ever-growing capital city of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Road traffic injuries here have doubled; 11,553 people died in Kyrgyzstan over 10 years, 958 were children. The project is aimed to raise awareness of road safety for school-aged children through the distribution of light reflectors. Light reflectors (jackets) make children visible on the roads and crossroads especially during dark times (dawn and dusk) and would prevent possible road accidents with children. Currently, shops in Kyrgyzstan do not offer light reflectors for purchase and parents are not even aware that such a tool exists. The project is implemented through selling light reflectors to anybody interested (i.e. parents for children). All revenue from sales would be distributed for free light reflectors for children from poor families in the “new settlements” around the capital city.

Project 13: Mohammad Newaz Sharif, Kazi Ashief Mahmood

“Somriddhi/Prosperity - Empowering Women Through Learning and Earning” (Bangladesh)

This project, created by Mohammad Newaz Sharif and Kazi Ashief Mahmood from the Brandt School, aims to develop skills for income generation of 30 women in the first year and gradually increase to 120 in three years. The project aims to benefit survivors of domestic abuse/violence due to zero-income, which often results in zero-participation in family decision making in a disaster-prone and predominant patriarchal society. The project begins with a 1-month training on handicraft and handloom trades followed by a seed fund to each for raw materials. This project will utilize the best marketing strategies to make a profit, of which 20% will be deposited for business continuity, training and seed funding for new batches. Additionally, psychosocial stress management and communication training will be provided. It's a do-it-yourself model where the team sharpens and uses certain skills for the betterment of their family and society.



**Project 14: Charlotte Lydia Bock, Mani Bhushan Kumar Jha, Kenny Chan, Sydney Kloster
“SAFE - Social Artisan Fund for indigenous Entrepreneurs” (Colombia, Germany)**

Four students from the Brandt School: Charlotte Bock, Manu Bhushan Kumar Jha, Kenny Chan, and Sydney Kloster, created SAFE to alleviate poverty of indigenous women, thus families and communities in Colombia and promote indigenous cultural preservation. The indigenous women entrepreneurs aim to sell their products in Germany in order to get out of poverty and create a sustainable and worth living future for their indigenous communities. SAFE aims to be a key supporter of them by presenting the unique stories of indigenous women's work and life via video documentations, photography, and written articles provided on SAFE's worldwide e-commerce platform for intercultural education and awareness. The indigenous women long-term goal is to build up an artisan school, where they educate and teach their children on the production of traditional arts and crafts and the necessary entrepreneurial skills, thus maintaining the enterprise and school by themselves. For this purpose an “Artisan Fund” for the establishment of the school will be created by SAFE's sales profit.

**Project 15: John Kamoga, Anastasia Steinbrunner, Gitungo Wamere
“GreenTrends Social Enterprise for Education and Sustainable Goods” (Uganda)**

The project, created by Brandt School students John Kamoga, Anastasia Steinbrunner, Gitungo Wamere, would start as a low threshold-high ceiling channel to provide income to vulnerable people in Uganda leveraging their knowledge of natural materials and ecosystems. It shall expand into providing schools with an educational component to increase innovation and encourage creative thinking through project-based curriculum and product creation challenges. As material cultivation expands, they would use it as a platform for climate positive agricultural practices and environmentally conscious consumption. The project intends to address gaps in income, education, and sustainable agriculture.

About the Commitment Award

The Engagementpreis Foundation and the Willy Brandt School of Public Policy have been organizing the Commitment Award in close cooperation since 2012. It offers students, alumni of the Brandt School and people whose ideas they support the opportunity to apply what they have learned during their studies and to initiate new social initiatives here in Erfurt and around the world.

An independent jury of experts will select three winners based on the criteria degree of charity, effectivity, as well as their potential for success and sustainability. The awards include a starting capital of 2.500, 1.500 and 1.000 Euros.

The next Commitment Award Ceremony will be streamed online on July 7, 2020.

For more information, please visit commitmentaward.org

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