



# ENTERPRISE EVALUATION

R E P O R T

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**JANUARY 2018**

DAYS FOR  
 GIRLS



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# Every Girl. Everywhere. Period.

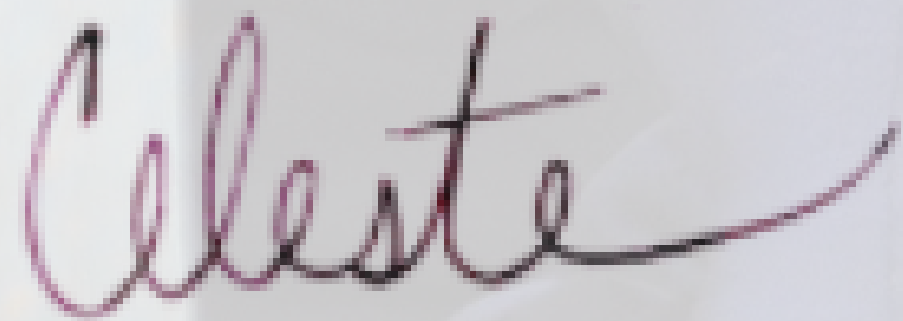
When Days for Girls set a goal this high, we knew it would require a combination of volunteers, social enterprises, and partners all over the world. In fact, in the same year that we launched our first Days for Girls Chapter, in the United States, we also offered our first Make Your Own Kit training, in Zimbabwe. Soon after, our efforts began to prove that a Days for Girls Enterprise Program could work, putting menstrual health solutions and education directly in the hands of women in their own communities.

It's been less than five years since we launched our first official Days for Girls Enterprise. The rapid scale — new trainings, new offices, new projects — has since exceeded all expectations. We have great plans for the future!

And yet, recently, we stopped. In order to make sure our movement was still on the right path, we knew it was time to pause and assess what's working, what's not, and what we can do better. To honor our commitments, to discover and support best practices, before continuing full speed ahead on this journey together.

As we now prepare to scale even further, we embrace the importance of ongoing research, evaluation, and data. This report is the first of what will be an annual evaluation process of the Days for Girls Enterprise Program, so that we continue ensuring that our structure and goals are in line with what's happening on the ground. Thank you to all who have made this possible.

For the girls,



Celeste Mergens  
Founder & CEO

# Summary

This report aims to provide a brief history of the Days for Girls Enterprise journey, identify best practices and challenges, clarify partnerships, and map out a vision for the future.

Research methods used over a 6-month period included interviewing Micro-Enterprise Leaders and Mentors, conducting survey research, and analyzing monthly reports.

Our findings showed great potential for expanding and scaling the Days for Girls Enterprise Program, after making several structural changes and strategic shifts. They include:

1. **Simplify terminology and streamline training**
2. Develop further **marketing tools and training** to increase local market and sales
3. Hire additional country-level staff for on-boarding and **sustainability support**
4. Strengthen **supply chain**

The report also includes recommendations for Days for Girls volunteers who are ready to launch an enterprise or support an existing project.



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# Our Enterprise Journey

Days for Girls International began in 2008 as a volunteer-based sewing circle model, creating and delivering DfG Kits\* to developing countries. As our movement multiplied, more and more of the women receiving DfG Kits and educational programs wanted to start circles in their own communities; Days for Girls responded with the means to help them replicate the successes, to expand our efforts to reach **Every Girl. Everywhere. Period.**

In 2011, we offered our first Ambassador of Women's Health (AWH) and Kit Making trainings in Kenya and Zimbabwe, followed by more specialized trainings in Uganda in 2012. Soon afterwards, we launched our first official DfG Center in Uganda. This DfG Center provided a central location for learning and refining our programs, working with stakeholders, conducting market research, building local management, securing supply chains, and increasing training capacity.

Within five years, the Days for Girls Enterprise Program had grown beyond our wildest dreams! With 69 certified Micro-Enterprises, 158 emerging, and over 300 requests, we are well on our way to scaling operations to meet our goal of serving 5 million women and girls by 2024. This has required learning as we go, adjusting our model while simultaneously juggling program development and growth. This report highlights those unique challenges and exciting opportunities.

The DfG Kit is Days for Girls' washable pad, which comes in a variety of combinations. All DfG Kits include an absorbent fabric liner and a waterproof shield. DfG Kits range from the DfG Supreme Kit (8 liners, 2 shields, 2 plastic bags, 1 cloth bag, 2 pairs of panties, 1 bar of soap, 1 washcloth) to the DfG Pod (1 shield and 2 liners).



# Micro-Enterprise Snapshot: December 2017

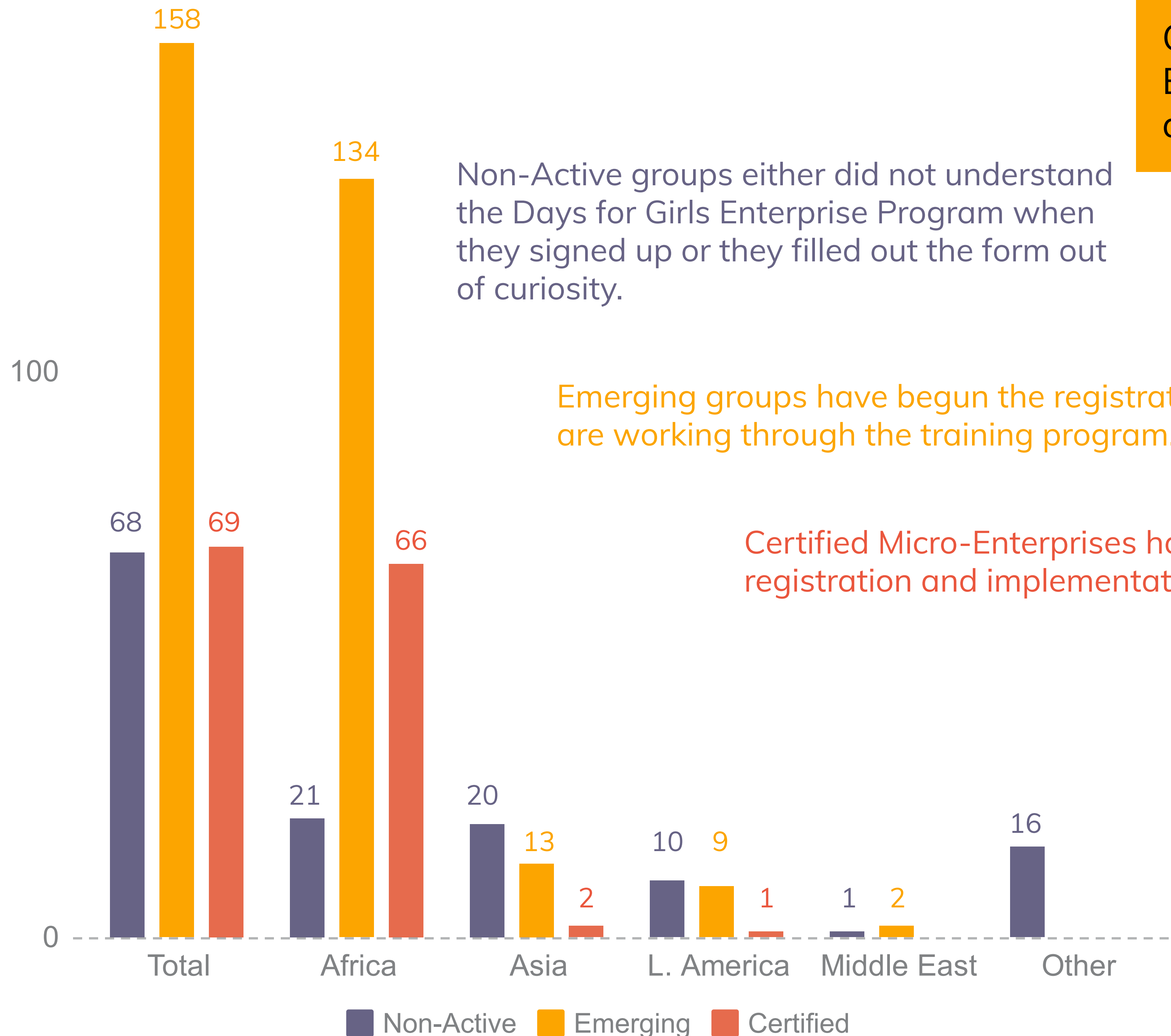
**23%** of the 295 Micro-Enterprise Projects are fully certified by Days for Girls International, while the remaining 77% are either non-active, or emerging projects.

Of the 69 fully certified Micro-Enterprise Projects, **96%** are located in Africa.

Non-Active groups either did not understand the Days for Girls Enterprise Program when they signed up or they filled out the form out of curiosity.

Emerging groups have begun the registration process and are working through the training program.

Certified Micro-Enterprises have completed all of our registration and implementation steps.



# RESEARCH & EVALUATION



# Methodology

After conducting a Leadership Workshop with Enterprise leaders from five nations (Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan) in Spring 2017, Days for Girls International decided to embark on a 6-month review of our Enterprise Program to assess its impact, evaluate best practices, identify challenges, and make recommendations for refinements, structure, and expansion.

Our methodology included:

- Surveys emailed to Micro-Enterprise Leaders
- Email & Skype correspondence and feedback from active Micro-Enterprise Leaders
- Review of Micro-Enterprise monthly assessments
- Analysis of raw materials order rates
- Analysis of daily operations and marketing observations
- Focus group discussions with staff
- Research of best practices and peer organizations
- Audit of existing and past Micro-Enterprise training resources and program iterations

# Methodology Details

## Surveys

- August - October 2017
- Online Survey
- 31 Respondents
  - 24% of Certified Micro-Enterprises
  - 9% of Emerging Micro-Enterprises
  - 2 Inactive Micro-Enterprises
- Micro-Enterprise Location
  - Africa: 71%
  - Asia: 23%
  - Latin America: 6%
  - Middle East: 0%
- 65% of respondents were Micro-Enterprise Leaders; 26% were Micro-Enterprise Mentors; 9% had another role

## Monthly Assessments

- Monthly reports from Micro-Enterprises
- Micro-Enterprises called by Center staff
- 37 Micro-Enterprises completed at least 1 assessment
- 28 Micro-Enterprises completed at least 3 assessments
- Average of 5.6 months of data per Micro-Enterprise
- Micro-Enterprise Location:
  - Africa: 96%
  - Latin America: 4%\*

\*NOTE: Asia is not included because the projects that we have in Asia were in early stages and not ready to submit Monthly Reports when data collection began.



# Evaluation Summary

The Days for Girls Enterprise Program is achieving four significant goals in line with the organization's mission and vision:

- Creating leadership and job opportunities for women
- Increasing access to menstrual care
- Advancing community-led health education programs
- Providing local access points for DfG Kit supplies

Our findings paint a picture of promise, potential, and persistence as we navigate a steep learning curve with myriad partners and occasional setbacks.

Through this Enterprise model, Days for Girls continues to empower women and put their communities on a pathway to dignity, health, and opportunity for all.

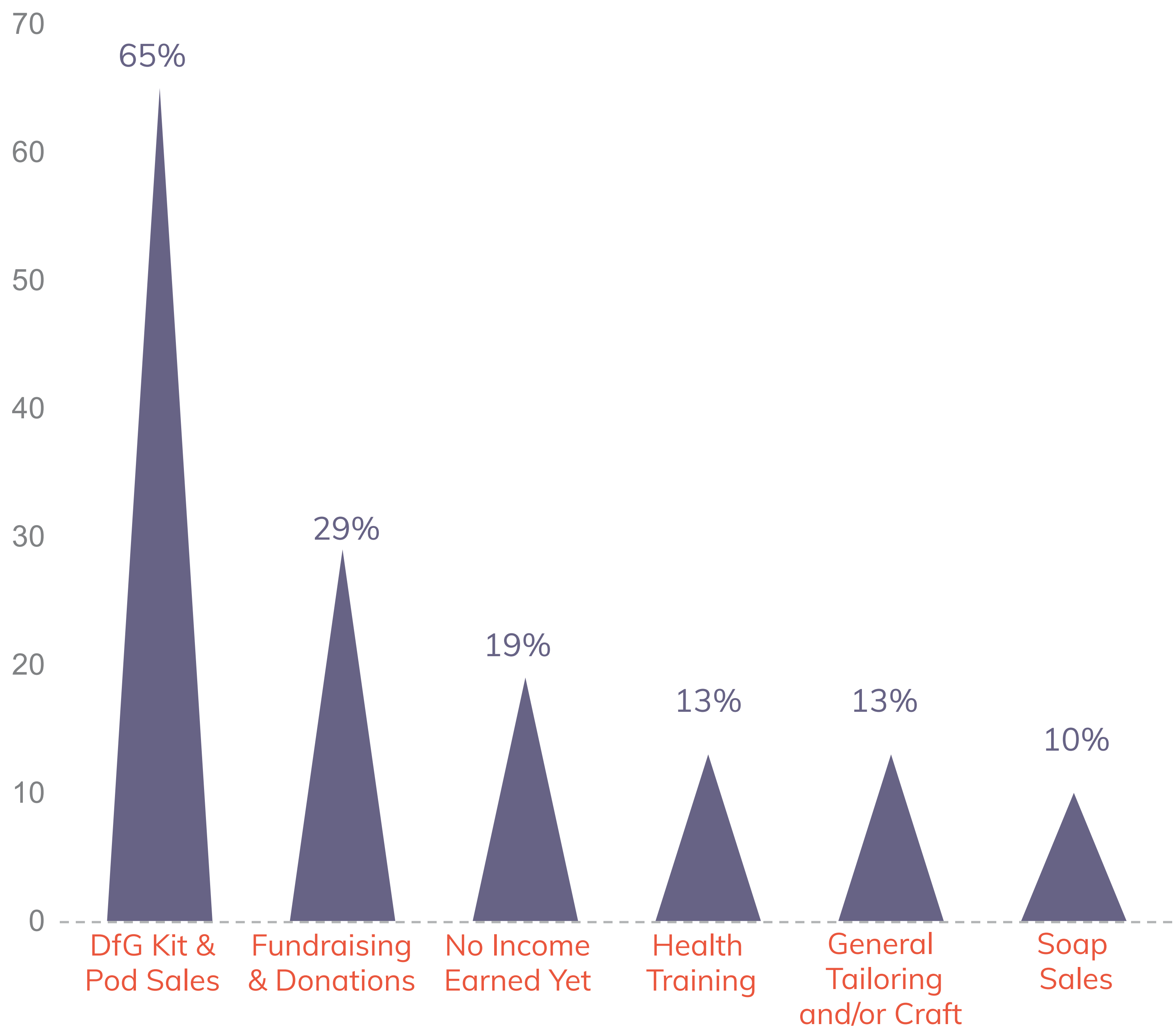
# Micro-Enterprise Performance:

## Quick Stats on Income

<b>81%</b> of Micro-Enterprises reported earning an income	<b>68%</b> of Micro-Enterprises report their members earned less than \$25 USD per month before joining the Micro-Enterprise
<b>45%</b> of Micro-Enterprises are part of another business	Of Micro-Enterprises whose members earned less than \$25 USD per month before joining, <b>73%</b> reported their members' income increased since joining the Micro-Enterprise
<b>68%</b> of Micro-Enterprises have 10 or less members	
<b>73%</b> of Micro-Enterprises receive support from a Chapter/Team or another organization	Most common sources of income: DfG Kit & Pod sales ( <b>65%</b> ) Fundraising & donations ( <b>29%</b> )

Source: Micro-Enterprise Survey

# Micro-Enterprise: Income Sources



**19%** of Micro-Enterprises had not earned income yet before the date of the survey.

Of the groups reporting **no income** earned:

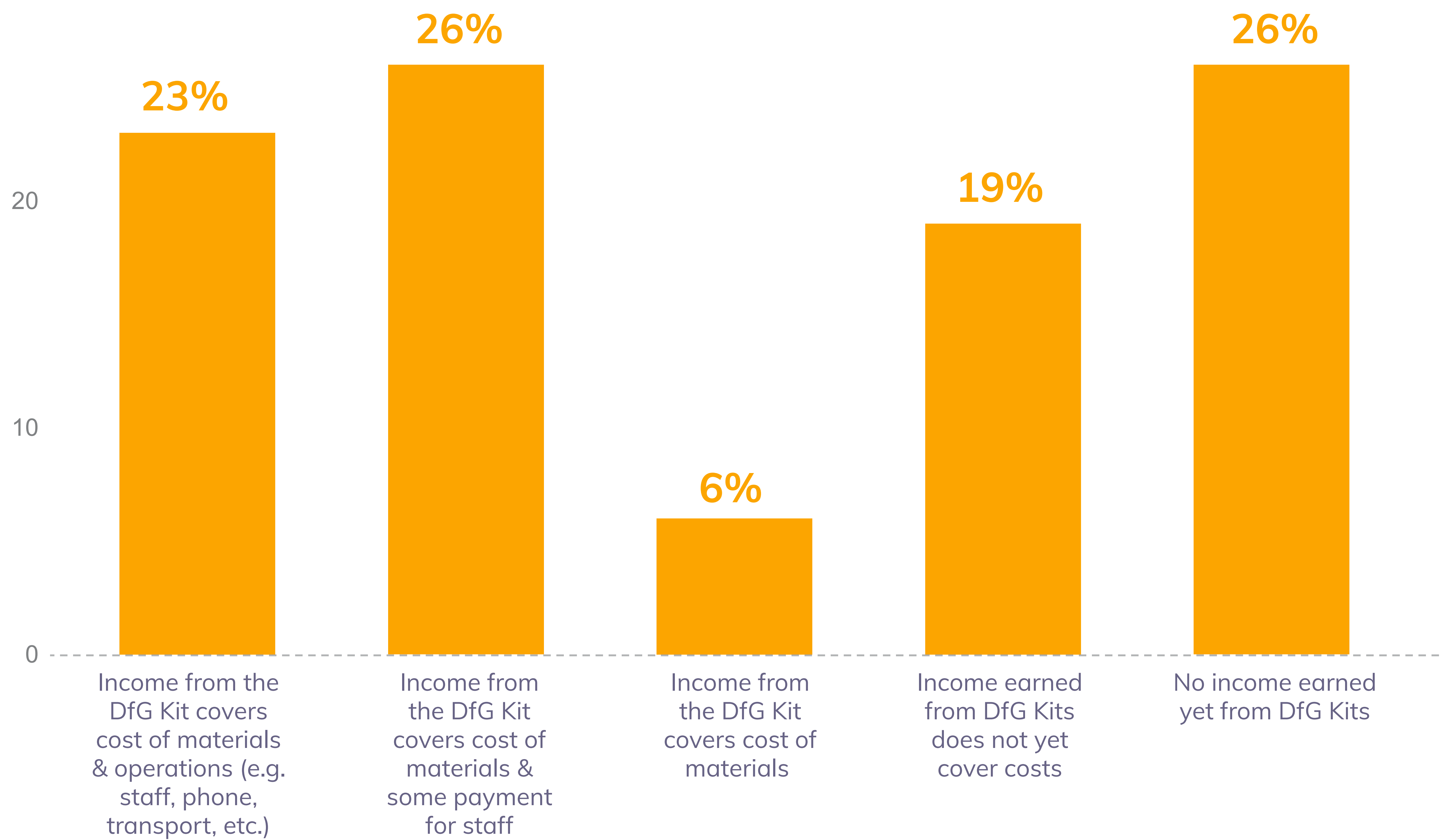
- **10%** did not intend to ever sell
- **27%** were still **starting up** and working through supply chain
- **27%** had been **inactive** since being trained with a very old version of the program (2015 or older). They decided to activate following the Uganda Micro-Enterprise Workshop
- **36%** **wanted to sell** but had not yet been able to (25% of them had not participated in any DfG training)

# Micro-Enterprise Performance:

## Quick Stats on Sales

32% sell on average 30 or more DfG kits per month	Micro-Enterprises reported large variations in the mean number of DfG Kits sold per month, from <b>0 to 430</b>
The largest number of DfG Kits sold in one month was <b>2,000</b>	
5 Micro-Enterprises have had months with over 300 DfG kits sold	All reporting Micro-Enterprises have sold <b>5,491</b> DfG Kits combined
Combined, Micro-Enterprises sell DfG Kits in <b>50%</b> of months reported	<b>82%</b> of Micro-Enterprises have reported selling DfG Kits

# Micro-Enterprise Financial Sustainability



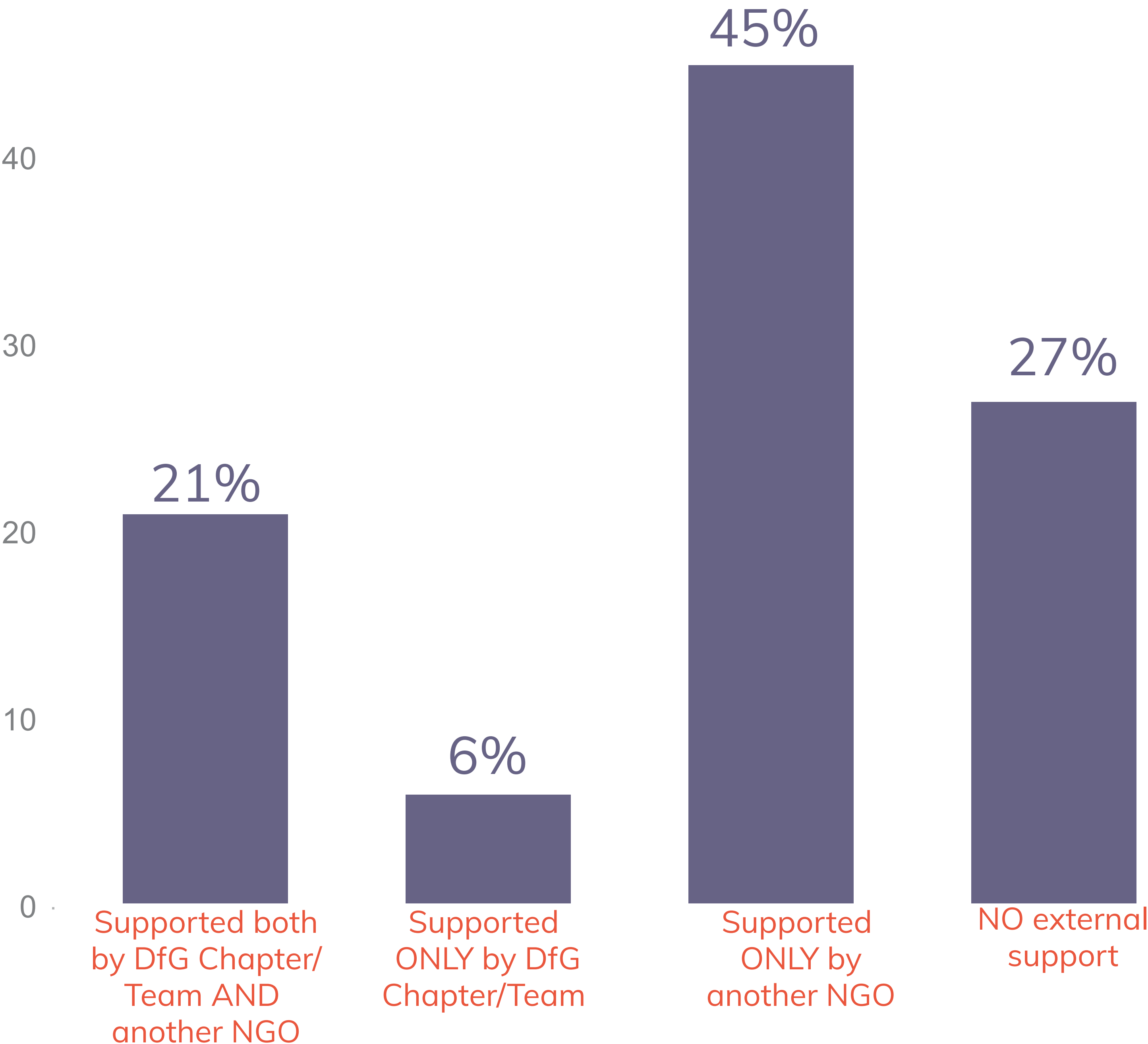
Source: Micro-Enterprise Survey

# Micro-Enterprise Support

**73%** of Micro-Enterprises receive some source of external support.

There are 4 types of support mechanisms found in Micro-Enterprise programs. The most common are **peer organizations** that adopt Days for Girls programming into their current organization. These include local or international NGOs with similarly aligned missions that want to supplement existing work.

Our research indicates that prospective partner materials, business plan development assistance, on-boarding training, and ongoing evaluations are leading to better program delivery.



# Feedback From Micro-Enterprise Mentors\*

14 Micro-Enterprise Mentors Responded to the Micro-Enterprise Mentor Survey

## Average Start Up Costs:

- \$2,500 USD

## Ongoing Monthly Costs:

- \$250 - \$600 USD per month

## Mentor Hours Per Project:

- 5-10 hours per week
- Most mentors noted decreasing hours per week as project matures

## Key Challenges Noted:

- Marketing
- Paying fair wages
- Cost of DfG Kits
- Maintaining quality standards
- Geographic challenges for rural groups
- Reliance on NGO customers

## What's Going Well:

- Job creation
- Local women gaining business confidence
- Developing partnerships
- Morale increases with every sale
- Women stepping into leadership roles within their communities

\*A Micro-Enterprise Mentor refers to an individual providing support (via donations, training, and/or site visits) to a Micro-Enterprise. Mentors are not paid members of the Micro-Enterprise, but play a volunteer role in providing external support. Many Micro-Enterprise Mentors are DfG Volunteers, representing a Chapter or Team. Not all Micro-Enterprises have Mentors.

# Recommendations From Micro-Enterprise Mentors

14 Micro-Enterprises Responded to the Micro-Enterprise Mentor Survey

## Needs:

- Regulate donated kits so they do not compete with Micro-Enterprise sales
- Share evaluation results
- Foster collaboration between groups
- Have a central Micro-Enterprise Leader of Staff in each country to coordinate
- Evaluate if Micro-Enterprises can be viable before letting them proceed

## Advice To Prospective Micro-Enterprises:

- Talk to other Micro-Enterprises to learn from their experiences
- Keep the business model flexible
- Partner with an existing entity
- Be realistic about income potential, time needed, and time to growth

## Advice For Days for Girls International:

- Share results, shout it from the rooftops!
- Support DfGI Programs Staff to develop new resources and tools within the Micro-Enterprise Program

This feedback aligns with the 5-year strategy set out by Days for Girls International for the Enterprise Program.

# Micro-Enterprise Leaders & Mentors, In Their Own Words

Aden Date,  
Leader, Tanzania

"A lot of our issues around sustainability boil down to us wanting to create fair-wage, stable salaried jobs. **Seems it is a lot easier to get an Enterprise sustainable if you have highly structured piece work for staff.** We had a lot of interesting discussions around the model. One challenge Christine faces is **donated Days for Girls Kits crowding out business for her Enterprise.** It's a huge market, so I'd never want to discourage kit production, but it seems strange that in a huge city like Nairobi that there would be overlap."

Jennifer Ting,  
Mentor, Malawi

"We now have one village producing 150 kits per month. Yet, the **supply chain is still not great.** We have no idea what other enterprise leaders are doing! Would be great if Days for Girls was officially registered in the country of Malawi."

Leone Madzinga,  
Leader, Zimbabwe

"I found the courses, and designing a business plan helpful, and made the setting up of the enterprise an **easier process than anticipated.** Looking at Zimbabwe, maybe have a country representative so that they all feed from the same angle."



# Partnerships: Our Path to Every Girl

Our rapid growth has benefited from a multitude of highly engaged supporters and adaptable partnerships. These structures allow Days for Girls to deliver unique programs at a grassroots level, incorporating place-based knowledge supported by funders who are deeply committed to these communities.

In addition to helping us scale quickly, working with external partners accelerates our shared learning. Our NGO and government partners benefit from access to our washable pad technology and educational materials; Days for Girls benefits from their research on health, water, sanitation, and so much more.





# Looking at Sustainability

The Oxford English Dictionary defines sustainability as *the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level, or, avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance.*

Days for Girls International strives to have all Enterprises set goals to reach environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

**Environmental:** The project operates whenever possible in ways that will reduce negative environmental impacts. We encourage local sourcing, job creation in rural and peri-urban areas, and avoiding creating unnecessary waste.

**Social:** The project fosters leadership, health education, confidence, and decision-making power at the grassroots level.

**Economic:** The project generates enough revenue to cover its costs and to support a supplemental income for women.

# Recommendations

- The Days for Girls Enterprise structure works best as a franchise model, with Days for Girls International setting the certification requirements and Offices handling oversight and program implementation.
- Days for Girls “Centers” will be renamed to “Offices.” As extensions of Days for Girls International, they are responsible for convening and facilitate workshops, trainings, and data collection, as well as managing regional supply chain.
- Days for Girls International may appoint a County Representative or Enterprise to assist with management and coordination in countries that do not have a DfG Office.
- Micro-Enterprises will be renamed to Enterprises, a more accurate reflection of their significant impact.
- Days for Girls Enterprise trainings will be revamped to include modularized curriculum that is replicable, consistent, and adaptable — and will be required by all aspiring Enterprise leaders, regardless of past experience.
- Days for Girls International staff will create will continue creating and improving Enterprise marketing materials and business strategies.
- Enterprise model growth will focus on strategic identification of new sites (both for Offices and Enterprises) and efficient/effective management systems that support growth.



**Enterprise  
Structure  
Revision**



**Centers as  
Arms of  
DfGI**



**Enterprise  
Training  
Revamped**

• • • • •



**Strategic Site  
Identification**



**Alignment  
With  
Partners**



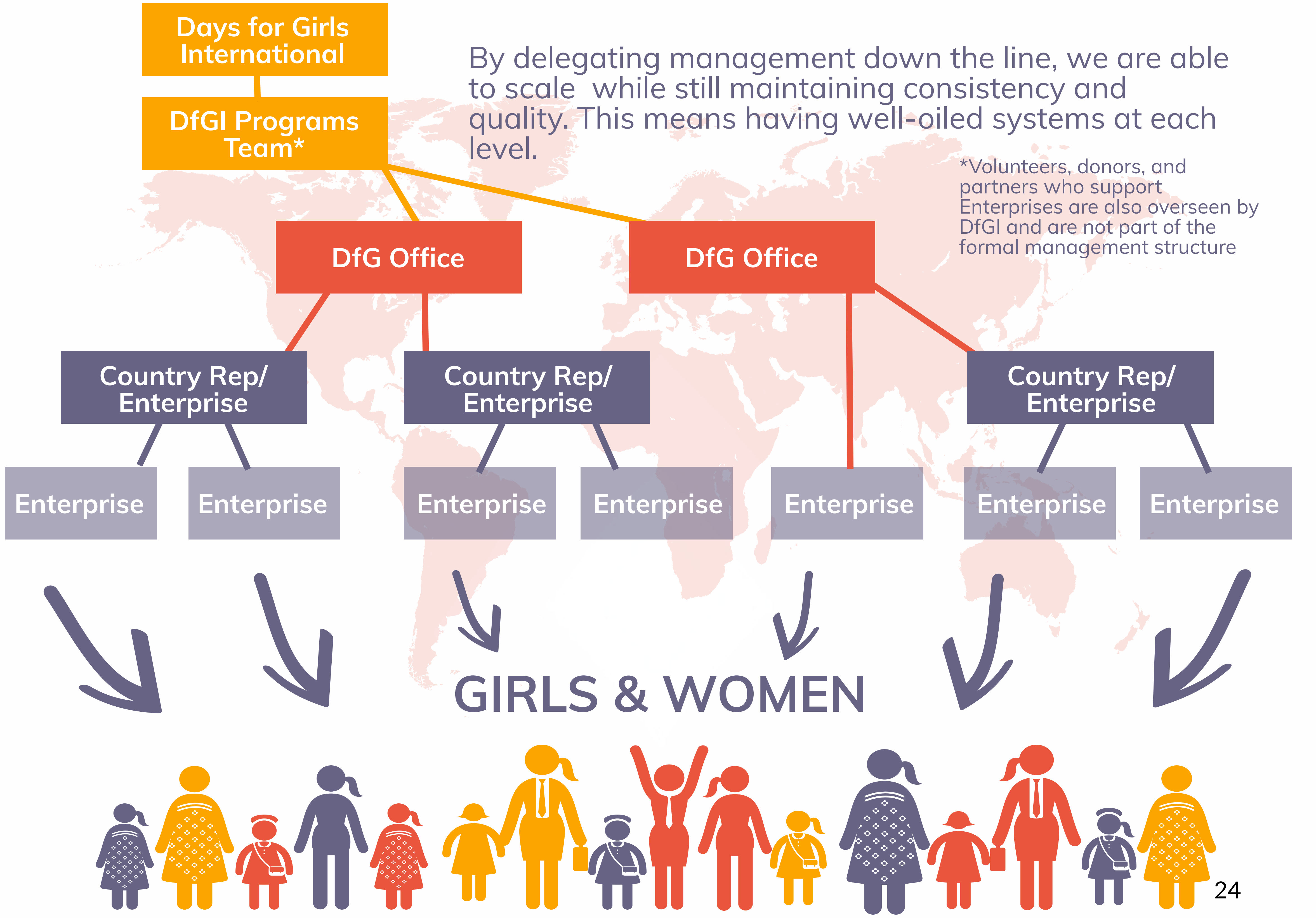
**Balanced  
Growth**

# Terminology Revisions

Based on ongoing feedback from partners, volunteers, and supporters around the world, Days for Girls International is making a few key terminology adjustments. These changes will help to streamline programming and the global Enterprise management structure.

BEFORE	MOVING FORWARD
Micro-Enterprises	Enterprises
Days for Girls Centers	Days for Girls Offices
Days for Girls University	DfG Leadership Launchpad

# The Enterprise Management Structure





# Education & Training

As with all Days for Girls activities, education is a key component of the Enterprise Program. The trainings offered through the program create a strong foundation for long-term success. Our data show a strong correlation between participating in Enterprise training and running a successful Enterprise.

Days for Girls International and Offices are working on extensive training revisions and supplemental materials designed to support new projects and provide up-to-date resources to existing projects.

Revisions and updates to Enterprise Program trainings are based on an accumulation of feedback and data from our diverse network of stakeholders.

# Enterprise Training Going Forward

- **NEW!** All Enterprises must complete every module in order to become a certified Enterprise, regardless of Days for Girls or business experience.
- **DfG Enterprise Training Modules:**
  - DfG Pathways Module (DfG Philosophy, Bridging, Mission/Vision, M&E)
  - DfG Ambassador of Women's Health Module
  - DfG Business Module (Marketing, Business Plans, Business Skills, Admin/Record Keeping)
    - The DfG Business Module will build upon the existing business training (marketing, business plans, administration/record-keeping, and sales strategies), but with new & improved training content & activities
    - By popular demand, we will begin developing and providing sample business plans and marketing materials for various scenarios, including:
      - Rural, no support
      - Rural, lots of support
      - Urban, no support
      - Urban, lots of support
    - We will release a **new Marketing Suite** with sample marketing materials that will be made available to Enterprises
  - DfG Sewing Module (DfG Kit Patterns, Quality Control Points, Helpful Tips)
- **Each Training Module includes the following:**
  - Manual & Activity Book
  - Training Flip Chart
  - Recommended Activities
  - Mentor Training

# Required Steps for Enterprise Registration

STEPS	Online Option	DfG Leadership Launchpad Residential/Mobile
<b>PRE-REQS:</b> 1. Fill out the Pre-Registration Form to confirm Eligibility 2. Fill out the Registration Form 3. Select Training Type and complete payment to receive Enterprise ID #.	Visit <a href="http://www.daysforgirls.org/enterpriseprogram">www.daysforgirls.org/enterpriseprogram</a> to access the Prospective Partners Packet, Pre-Registration Form, and DfG Leadership Launchpad Application Form.  Phone interview conducted with DfG Staff and Local Partner/Participant.	
1. Sign the DfG Licensing Agreement and complete the DfG Pathways Module	Follow the prompts sent via follow-up email to sign the Licensing Agreement and to complete the Pathways Module.	<b>Complete all 5 steps at DfG Leadership Launchpad</b> provided in person at an Office or at an Enterprise site with a DfG Office Staff Trainer.  This will be a 2-week program following a set agenda, whether it is residential or mobile.  Partners must <b>sign a “Training Agreement”</b> prior to confirming the training, which will demonstrate their understanding of the agenda, time required, space required, and minimum attendance. Partners will also <b>complete a checklist</b> prior to the training program to <b>ensure that participants are prepared</b> for the program and that <b>partner expectations are aligned</b> .
2. Complete the DfG Ambassador of Women's Health Module	Complete the module via the resources sent by follow-up email.	
3. Complete the DfG Business Module	Use PDF Printable Course (sent in follow-up email).	
4. Complete the DfG Kit Making Module	Use PDF Printable Course (sent in follow-up email).	
5. Submit DfG Kit and Business Plan for final certification	Send photo or physical sample of the DfG Kit and submit a soft-copy of the Business Plan. Instructions are included in the DfG Business and Kit Making Modules.	

Starting in February 2018, all prospective Enterprises will be required to complete all components of the training. The reason for this shift is supported in the report evidence, and outlined in the report recommendations. **Enterprises will be required to complete certification before being allowed to sell Days for Girls products.**



# DAYS FOR GIRLS

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