

Sanam Vaziri Quraishi Foundation
Progress Report
January to April 2008

The year 2008 is poised to be a very exciting year for the people of Salabwek. With the support of **SVQF**, Free The Children will continue our efforts to provide quality programming through various education, water, health, and alternative income initiatives.

SALABWEK AT A GLANCE

The following community profile is an updated snapshot of Salabwek. The information provided below was compiled by Free The Children's Kenya team in April 2007. Due to the rural location of Salabwek and the limited capacity of the Kenyan government to carry out a thorough census, obtaining updated information regarding the population of the Masai Mara can be fairly challenging.

Free The Children has developed alternate strategies to ensure that we obtain the most accurate and up to date statistics. These strategies include complementing the existing information with data obtained through local government leaders (Area Chief, the Assistant Education Officer of the district, the District Officer), community leaders (women leaders, school head masters and deputy head teachers, teaching staff, church leaders, school parent committee), as well as parents and students.

Our Kenyan team connects with all these stakeholders through meetings and focus groups that take place at least twice a year. We also carry out community surveys which are extrapolated to provide a general idea of the region's general population statistics.

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| Location: | Salabwek is a Kipsigis community located near the Masai Mara in the Rift Valley Province. They originated in the Sudan and moved into the Kenyan area in the 18 th century. |
| Population: | Approximately 5,000 ¹ . |
| Currency: | Kenyan Shillings |
| Main Language: | Kipsigis, Swahili, some English |
| Number School Age Children: | roughly 900 |
| Number of Families: | 256 parents |
| Number of Men: | Approximately 2,500 |
| Number of Women: | Approximately 2,500 |
| Literacy Rate: | Approximately 90% are illiterate |
| <p>Salabwek’s main occupation is agriculture. According to our findings, families usually own a 3-4 acre plot where they would grow maize and beans. While the maize is part of subsistence farming practices and usually for consumption, the beans are part of revenue generating activities and are often the family’s only source of income. On average, Salabwek’s household income is less than \$1 US per day.</p> <p>Furthermore, there are limited educational institutions and opportunities available to the local population. Most children must walk on average three to four km to reach a primary level school. The government’s education policies have not effectively reached the populations of the Masai Mara region. For example, the government provides each child with only 12 exercise books and 3 pens per year.</p> | |

EDUCATION OVERVIEW

In the past two years Salabwek has experienced a significant increase in demand for educational facilities due to immigrating populations from neighbouring communities. Due to the great

¹ In the original assessment provided to SVQF in 2006 the population of Salabwek was cited as 1214 people. However since Free The Children started its educational and health programming in the region, many more people from remote rural areas started to travel to Salabwek to participate in Free The Children’s programs. As a result, we decided to widen the area of census to include the accurate amount of people that are now benefiting from our programming due to this increase in interest regionally.

success in school building projects, children from neighbouring rural areas are now travelling to Salabwek in hope of an education funded by Free The Children.

When Free The Children first arrived in Salabwek in 2006, the average class size was over 100 students per class, mainly due to the lack of educational facilities in the region. With the increased school building projects offered in the region, the class size has decreased to an average of 50 children per classroom. Free The Children's goal is to reduce this number to 40 students per classroom within the next year. To reach this goal and to satisfy the increased demand for access to an education, the need for more schools building projects has become a priority.

Thanks to the extraordinary support of **SVQF**, to date:

- Seven schools have been built and fully furnished, and are currently operating with the plan to be fully sustainable and community-run by the local ministry of education.
- One more school is currently under construction and is scheduled to be completed within the next 4 months.

With the construction of more school structures, we are not only aiming to lower class sizes and welcome the students into the well-lit, sturdy classrooms, but also to increase retention of the female students and provide quality education for all.

Teacher Incentive Program

Salabwek teachers are the pillars of the community, and they are pivotal development partners for Free The Children. It is through their active participation and commitment to our initiatives that we are often able to reach other members of the community.

Due to its popularity in the community, Free The Children has continued with its Teacher Incentive Program. The region-wide competition engages all levels of the community to contribute towards improving the educational environment and break deeply entrenched stereotypes prevailing in Kenyan society. Teachers, students, and parents must all work together in order to achieve success. They compete in the following categories regionally:

- Student attendance;
- Teacher attendance;
- Student marks improvement; and
- Cleanliness of communal facilities (including the headmaster's office, teacher offices, classrooms, latrines, and compound).

To date the competition has had a significant impact within the community. By engaging the community at all levels, Free The Children has instilled a sense of ownership and responsibility in the inhabitants of Salabwek. As a result, the men and women of the community have responded with a renewed sense of commitment. Some examples of such commitment include:

- Parents actively participate to achieve the overall success of the school by committing to send their children to school, including their daughters. They ensure that teachers are committed and are not at the market instead of the classroom, and make an extra effort to ensure that they have the necessary resources to send their children with adequate learning tools, proper attire and personal hygiene.

- Children take pride in their placement, and strive to maintain all that is requested by their elders and community leaders.
- Teachers keep one another more accountable in their attendance and punctuality in order to secure a better placement within the competition.

Education Stakeholder Meetings

Moreover teachers play a crucial role in the Education Stakeholder Series. This initiative involves a series of meetings with the community chief, the school headmaster, school teachers, the school committees and local leaders. The purpose of these meetings is to evaluate current educational strategies, compare existing options, determine best-practices and continually re-define school action plans to ensure quality primary education.

These meetings have also proven to be an effective tool in gender sensitization, as women play an active role in the discussions. The inclusion of women is essential as it demonstrates the importance for diverse representation and promotes women's visibility and voice in decision making processes at various levels,

In the last meetings in the last quarter most women spoke about their personal goals which included:

- Sending children to secondary school;
- Improving their mud home to a tin structure;
- Building a latrine on their homestead.

Based on these discussions, the women's group then develop action plans to reach these goals.

Education and Awareness

In addition to this, several Awareness Days have been organized. These events consist of bringing several communities together to a central location to exchange ideas among elders, women leaders, and local government officials while enjoying artistic expressions of storytelling, plays and poems written and performed by the youth groups. Past themes have included "saying no" to:

- child labor;
- alcoholism;
- drug use;
- female circumcision;
- and early marriages.

Future themes will revolve around peace and women empowerment.

The last Awareness Day took place in November, 2007, and over 3,000 people from the communities of Salabwek, Emori Joi, Enlerai, Motony, and Pimbiniyet attended the event.

| <u>Education: Summary</u> | |
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| Number of females enrolled in the school: | 436 |
| Number of males enrolled in the school: | 462 |
| Classrooms completed: | 7 |
| Number of teachers receiving training: | 18 |
| Number of educational workshops given: | 14 |
| Number of school kits distributed: | 900 |

WATER & HEALTH OVERVIEW

To date we have implemented a cost-effective health intervention with the provision of a functional water and sanitation system.

While health impacts on the many aspects of school life, our goal is to promote a quality health education program. The provision of latrines for sanitation, as well as continued training on personal hygiene for students and parents alike, are beneficial. Currently we are also providing sanitation workshops to demonstrate why and how households can build their own waste management systems, such as their own personal latrines, to prevent the spread of disease.

Salabwek now has access to clean water. Also called rain harvesting, the rain catching system uses the school's roof as a collection tool, funneling the rain through the gutters and into a storage tank. When this tank is filled, a pipe will then store the overflow into a seven foot deep underground storage unit for future use in the dry season. These systems are cost-effective and long lasting.

In addition, we continue to provide the services of the mobile health clinic. This involves running workshops in the community to educate people regarding issues such as: infectious diseases (including HIV/AIDS), personal hygiene and sanitation, mother and child health care, nutrition, and additional topics relevant to the community.

Mobile Health Clinic

With limited access to distant health care facilities, the rural mobile health care clinic has been a welcome answer for the community. The clinic includes three major components:

- a) educational outreach;
- b) primary health services; and
- c) emergency services.

Health education outreach consists of building the local community through training and workshops on the following topics: first aid, personal hygiene and sanitation, mother and child healthcare, nutrition, infectious diseases, family life education, and any other arising community concerns.

In addition, the clinic provides primary health care services to all inhabitants of Salabwek and surrounding communities. This entails the provision of medical treatment to specific health concerns and ailments. The clinic also provides de-worming services for all schoolchildren.

While the clinic’s emergency services are used only seldom, they prove to be life saving. Due to the absence of other health care facilities in the region, the emergency ambulance provided by the mobile health clinic is the only way to assist the community. In the past we have received calls from the school’s headmaster regarding a child at school who has fallen ill and needs immediate assistance. In times like these, we have been able to rush the child to the local clinic for immediate care and treatment.

Community Gardens

To further promote health and proper nutrition we have an integrated community garden in Salabwek. The community garden is located at the school site, and is run by the student Environment Club, which is responsible for weeding, planting, and cultivating the vegetables grown in the garden. The food is used to supplement the lunch food program.

Over 5000 people benefit from the garden, as it serves to demonstrate to the larger community the health benefits of a community garden.

Since the basic food staples in Salabwek’s inhabitants daily diets are limited to corn, maize and beans, having access to fresh vegetables, including cabbages, spinach, onions, and tomatoes, makes an incredible difference in the nutrition of the community, especially children.

| <u>Water and Health Programming Summary</u> | |
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| Number of clean waters systems built: | 1 |
| Number of latrines built: | 2 |
| Sanitation workshops provided: | 10 |
| People that used the mobile clinic services: | 1400 |
| Number of health kits distributed: | 900 |
| Health workshop workshops provided: | 10 |
| Gardens planted: | 1 |
| Size of the gardens: | 1/8 acre |
| Local participants who created the garden: | 50 |
| People who benefit from the garden: | 5000 |

ALTERNATIVE INCOME

To ensure the sustainability of the programs, we continue building upon women's groups through several alternative income initiatives.



Alternative income programs are integral to providing sustainable programs that create long term socio-economic opportunities. By providing local women with the knowledge, resources, and tools to generate income, Free The Children, in collaboration with local communities, facilitates employment opportunities. Our alternative income projects are broken down into three phases:

Phase 1:

Women are mobilized into more formal women's groups that help women establish their own participation, ownership, and recognition of their own access and control over resources. They then initiate small projects within each group. The focus of the small projects are decided and implemented solely by the group members and often include the purchase of goats, tin sheets for their homes, or water containers to harvest rain.

The Kenyan Free The Children team of community development workers have been able to provide women with tailored workshops to complement existing business training, such as general health care training.

Phase 2:

After successful completion of the program's first stage, the groups move to more advanced group formation training such as: writing group, learning leadership processes and conflict resolution strategies, minute-taking, and human and children's rights issues.

Phase 3:

Once the training is completed and put into practice by the group, Free The Children provides financial literacy training. Small loans are given to expand or establish small businesses and provide additional household income. Small loans provide women with the opportunity to be empowered by allowing them to increase their influence over some of the household economic decisions.

Parents, children and leaders are increasingly finding more innovative ways to get involved with local community projects. Men, women, and youth have joined the alternative income groups in increasing numbers. The project initially began with 4 women's groups in Salabwek, and this number has grown to include 11 groups. Presently there are 21 women's groups, and each group has on average 23 members.

Together the groups learn collectively about leadership, instruments of democracy and governance, and conflict resolution in order to successfully manage their groups and move forward in financial literacy, business skills training, and micro-financing. Women's leadership training, together with literacy and business skills workshops, is providing for a bright future for the community of Salabwek.

Group support is instrumental to the implementation of successful businesses. Most groups gather once a week to meet. The responsibility to host the meetings is shared amongst group members on a rotational basis. Every group must run all aspects of the meeting, including taking attendance, minutes, etc. During the meetings each member will contribute with a

previously determined amount of money, which is then given to the group's treasurer. The treasurer will then invest the money on an item or project that the group has decided upon. In many cases the purchase will be that of domestic animals, such as goats or chickens. Other projects include purchasing tin sheets for roofing. All decisions are reached as a consensus and are based on each group's needs.

Once a full rotation within a group has taken place, the groups host a celebration party to recognize their success and congratulate one another. In the month of April alone five women's groups (Good Shepherd, Kaliet, Mwangaza, Single Mothers A and Single Mothers B) celebrated their success.

| <u>Alternative Education Programming Summary</u> | |
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| Average number of workshops per month: | 4 |
| Average monthly income of participants before the program: | \$1 US |
| Number of program participants: | 438 |
| Number of women's groups: | 18 |

GENDER EQUITY

The full inclusion of gender as a cross cutting theme is imperative in breaking Kenya's cycle of poverty. Projects are addressing gender disparities in education, employment, etc. One of the greatest benefits of the alternative income programs is that they help to identify gender social norms and perceptions within the community. Living in a patriarchal society, the women of Salabwek have traditionally been marginalized within their community. Having to face challenges such as female circumcision, early marriages, and lack of educational opportunities, Salabwek girls and women need support in order to achieve parity.

Leadership is at the forefront of projects to support and encourage women's ability to guide. We empower women through capacity building initiatives, such as a two-day women's leadership conference that will be held this month where local women leaders will be networking with their peers, receiving community leadership skills, and planning for the future of their communities. Over 80 women's groups from Salabwek and several neighbouring communities will be participating in the conference. Some of the people invited to attend this event include leaders of Salabwek's women's groups (Chairlady, Asst. Chairlady, Treasurer, Secretary, Asst. Secretary).



The conference is the first of its kind in the Masai Mara and it holds a special significance since local government officials have agreed to attend the event. This is a major step towards achieving gender equity in the region.

We are honoured to be working so closely with the women of Salabwek to provide skills and support so they can create the community they want for their children and families.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Community involvement is the core of all Free The Children programming. Salabwek is a shining example of how imperative active community involvement is to ensure the success of our projects.

With a strong spirit of unity, the Salabwek community raised funds collectively through *Harambees* - community fundraisers. The purpose of these events was to gather enough funds to build a local road to the school. This road would enable volunteers to bring required materials and assist with construction. Salabwek men took turns standing guard around the clock while the building supplies were on the school site. Women carried water from their local water source in order to enable construction work.

In addition, parents created a school committee. The purpose of the committee is to ensure the proper management of the school and to act as the liaison among school authorities, other community members, local government, teachers, and students. Due to the high quality of the schools and the admirable commitment of the Salabwek community to education, the local government has given Free The Children-built schools recognition by obtaining the support of the national government in providing funding for teachers and education.

CONCLUSION

SVQF has made a generous contribution to all the people in Salabwek. Through collaboration and general involvement, the project outcomes have helped to shape the lives of the people in the community. Together, and with the active participation of the community in all the programs, **SVQF** and Free The Children are empowering the people of Salabwek to be the main creators of change.