

Sanam Vaziri Quraishi Foundation
Progress Report
May to July 2008

Free The Children is pleased to report on progress made on development projects undertaken in the Salabwek community in Kenya. Several important steps have taken place to ensure the efficient implementation of all SVQF supported projects.

EDUCATION OVERVIEW

The goal for the school building project is to have the last classroom structure funded by SVQF fully completed by September 2008. This includes all classroom furnishing, provision of textbooks, educational material and finishing touches. Reaching this deadline will allow us to have the classroom ready for the beginning of the Kenyan academic year.

Significant progress has been made to date on the construction of this structure. During the past three months Free The Children staff and volunteers have worked very closely with the community to dig the foundation of the building. Community members routinely rotated to contribute towards building the foundation walls, and fill the concrete flooring of the classroom. Within the next month, we will complete the roofing of the classroom, and install the necessary windows and doors of the structure.

The seven classrooms that were previously built with the generous support of SVQF, are now fully functional and in use. The inauguration of the classrooms was a community event and several local leaders attended it. The assignment of the classrooms to students was a particularly moving moment. Traditionally, the older students have first pick at which classrooms they want to study in. However, with the spirit of community in mind, the older classes chose to give the youngest students the right to first enter and benefit from the new classrooms. As a result of this display of generosity from the older students, the brand new classrooms are currently being used by grades Standard 1 and up.

The teachers and students have taken complete ownership of the classrooms and are very excited about the new structures. Together, teachers and students have decorated the insides of the classrooms with decorations made by the students who used local materials. Many classrooms display material relevant to the topics the students are learning. For the younger students this often includes cut outs of the alphabet, posters with the days of the week and months of the year, and even a write out of the national anthem.

The cleanliness and overall order of the classrooms are also a shared responsibility between the school staff and the students. Students are assigned on a rotational basis to daily sweep the classrooms. The school's health club is in charge of monitoring these activities. The



continuous involvement of student, teachers and the community in general in the projects is key to ensure their sustainability. As such, Salabwek is a prime example of how a community comes together, takes ownership of all implemented projects, and organizes itself to preserve and maintain said projects.

WATER & HEALTH OVERVIEW

Rain Catchment System

Supported by SVQF, the rain catchment water system is a very successful project that is now in use. The implementation of this cost-effective system has had incredible impact in the community.

With the building of the water project, the entire community of Salabwek now has access to a clean and safe local water source. To complement the water system, our Kenya staff is providing a series of workshops on water and sanitation in order to build capacity within the community. The workshops create awareness regarding the significance of clean water and the positive impact that basic hygiene has on health. Consequently, one of the most important outcomes of the implementation of this project has been the increase in health consciousness that the population Salabwek has experienced. Community members are now significantly more aware of the health risks that come with using and drinking contaminated water. Personal hygiene has become a priority and the importance of sanitation is a topic of discussion within the community.

To respond to this community interest and to engage all stakeholders on the topic, we will execute a small art project around the water system by providing paint and guidance for some students to paint the outsides of the tank. The purpose of this project is to further accentuate and emphasize the importance of the water tank as a separate entity of the school, opposed to a natural addition to the campus. With supportive programming around water use, this will, again, bring attention to the importance of using clean water, water cleanliness, and general sanitation for the school.

Mobile Health Clinic

Complementing Free The Children's water and sanitation programming, the mobile clinic works closely with Salabwek's Primary School.

The Mobile Clinic counts with a professional staff of five committed individuals who work for Free The Children. With a winning combination of recognized credentials and extensive field experience, the current Free The Children Health Team includes: Michelle Hambly, a registered Canadian nurse who is our Africa Health Programs Director, Beverly Kandie (nurse), Loice Kerich (nurse), and Edna Mutai (nurse). This team is in charge of operating the Mobile Health Clinic while liaising with the school and supporting several student-led health initiatives.

Some of the school health programs supported by the Mobile Clinic staff include two very popular student clubs: the health club, and the environmental club. Our staff works closely with these two clubs building capacity through workshops that teach them relevant health topics such as:

- Personal hygiene
- Compound/household cleanliness
- Boiling water
- The importance of building latrines
- Water borne infections and prevention methods
- HIV/AIDS

These initiatives are of great importance because they reinforce the knowledge acquired by the children through the community health workshops. The programs also engage them at a basic level and train them to educate their peers. Once involved, students acquire a personal interest in the subject, and not only actively disseminate the information to their friends and family, but also become relatable role models for fellow students.

CLUB INFORMATION	STUDENT HEALTH CLUB	STUDENT ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB
Members Registered in the Club	42 students	36 students
Teacher in charge (school patron)	Ezra Rotich	John Leberes
Chairperson (student)	Jackson Langat	Gladys Chepkemoi
Assistant chairperson (student)	Abigael Cheronno	David Sang
Club Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring all hand washing stations at the school. • Assisting with cultivation the vegetables in the school garden. • Maintaining and organizing the cleaning of the school compound and the latrines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date, members have planted over 330 trees in the school compound • Assisting the Health Club to ensure the cleanliness of the compound, and taking care of the school garden.

Furthermore, the Mobile Clinic staff recently executed a de-worming campaign that included the entire student and teacher population. This measure will help prevent the spread of worms among students, which is one of the most common health concerns in rural

communities. During this process, each participant receives medication along with prevention techniques.

GENDER EQUITY OVERVIEW

Following our commitment to prioritizing women’s health and achieving gender equity in all communities, the Free the Children health staff continuously works with local women to educate, build capacity and teach preventive measures on various health-related topics. In Salabwek, our staff currently works with 12 women’s groups:

WOMEN’S GROUP	MEMBERS	HEALTH WORKSHOPS RECEIVED
Good Shepherd Women’s Group	22 members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition/food groups • Personal hygiene and sanitation • HIV/AIDS • Prenatal care and postnatal care • The importance of immunization for infants
Kaliet Women’s Group	27 members	
Tachesti Women’s Group	17 members	
Single Mother’s Women’s Group	15 members	
Omomet Women’s Group	20 members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition/food groups • Personal hygiene and sanitation • HIV/AIDS • Prenatal care and postnatal care
Chepkechei Women’s Group	20 members	
Mwangaza Women’s Group	22 members	
Chepngarngarok Women’s Group	19 members	
Testai Women’s Group	26 members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal hygiene and sanitation
Subuko Women’s Group	15 members	
Keptarakon Women’s Group	13 members	
Tangoret Women’s Group	15 members	

Women’s Leadership Conference

Female empowerment is at the forefront of our agenda to achieve gender equity. We believe that educating women and reinforcing their self-confidence is the first step towards empowerment. To accomplish this, in early May 2008 Free The Children supported the first Women’s Leadership Conference in the Masaai Mara.

The conference was an outstanding success with the attendance of over 80 women’s group from six different communities across the Masaai Mara. The conference provided women with an opportunity to: voice their concerns, discuss local challenges, and brainstorm for potential solutions in a safe and open environment. Some of the topic that were discussed during the conference included:

- Female genital mutilation
- Early marriages
- Women's health
- Importance of education
- Alcoholism at home and within the community

This event was of particular importance since it was an initiative spearheaded by women's groups and supported by local officials. The message such support sent to all community members was clear: women's voices are important and should be heard.

All conference participants and organizers were impressed by the turnout and found the experience to be extremely rewarding as expressed by the following testimonials:



"We are so happy with all the teaching this training has given us, as Free The Children is building the women groups." Alice Borr



"When I woke up, my children asked me, 'where are you going, Mama? You haven't finished your meeting yet?' They saw I had put on my nicest clothes and bathed with lotion, so they knew I was going somewhere important. They hadn't known even their Mama could have such an important meeting to go to. Thank you for opening our eyes. We had eyes and ears before but we didn't know how to use them to hear such important words as you are sharing with us now. We wouldn't know these things if it wasn't for you." Rusi Leleito



“It is as if we were lost, but it is as if the training has helped us find our way to develop ourselves.” Esther Tuiya



“No one is happier than me today. We learned so much about leadership. We couldn’t have done this ourselves, we are here thanks to Free The Children. Mamas (he said, turning to advice the women), use what you’ve been taught here these two days.” Chief Koske



“It is normally said that leaders are men, but today we proved leaders can also be women. Free The Children says they want to give children freedom. While it starts with a child walking, before that their freedom comes from women when they care for the child before they can care for themselves. In order to free the children, we must also free the women. We say thank God for Free The Children, and thank you for this meeting.” Counsellor William James



As it was said many times throughout the conference, by the conference presenters, local leaders, and the women themselves ... *“If you teach one mama, you teach the whole group.”*

These testimonials are just a few examples of the enthusiasm of the participating women, and the great success of the event. To end the conference with a highlight, the organizing committee along with local leaders gave all participants a recognition certificate stating that they had received the pertinent training.

CONCLUSION

With the constant support **SVQF**, and together with all the people in the community, Free The Children is transforming Salabwek. Through education, water, health and alternative income programming, we are building local capacity and empowering all community members to make their vision of change and progress, a reality. From school building to addressing gender equity challenges, our staff is committed to engage all stakeholders at every step of the process.