

**Sanam Vaziri Quraishi Foundation
Progress Report
July to September 2007**

Education

Free the Children welcome warm news on recent consultations in the community of Salabwek. As we walk in a classroom, all students stand to formally greet our staff. Our consultations with the students included a warm welcome that extended beyond the classrooms.

‘Good morning Robin!’ they all said at attention in a sing-song voice.
‘Good morning Class! *Mnasoma ya preps?*’ ‘You are studying in preps?’ Their brilliant smiles, obviously proud of their Saturday morning activity, yelled an enthusiastic ‘Yes!’ in response. I told the class that Sanam wanted to know how they were doing, and asked them what I should tell her.

“*Mwambie tuko salama. Mwambie tunaendelea kusoma.*” ‘Tell her we are at peace. Tell her we are continuing to study.’

“*Unajua, Sanam anapenda sana wanafunzi wakisoma. Akijua mnasoma ikiwa Jumamosi, atafurahi sana!*” ‘You know, Sanam *loves* when students are studying. If she knew you were all studying on a Saturday, she would be so happy!’

“*Mwambie tunafuata vile alituambia! Tutasoma!*” ‘Tell her we are following what she told us! We will study!’

While five classrooms are completed and two are currently under construction, lessons plans have resumed. Every year in September is a particularly important time for students. It is times when all of the students begin their final term for the school year, Term III and the final exams in November indicate how many students are able to go on to the next grade. Additional classes are offered called “preps” for the teachers to prepare the students as thoroughly as possible for the final exams. Standards 7 and 8 even come to school for Saturday mornings between 8:20am – noon.

According to observation, students are well on their way to successful exams in November. The younger grades have taken up residence in the new schools, of which the seventh is being completed. Teachers have made decorations, even made their own signs to teach the students on colors, numbers, and weather patterns.



Water & Sanitation

In addition to the on-going construction of the water project, teaching the students along with the community the importance of sanitation through simple actions has taken place. A hand-washing campaign was initiated through what is called the Leaky Tin Method. The Leaky Tin Method involves putting a 5 gallon container full of water near the washrooms, poking a hole in the bottom, then plugging the hole with a stick. When children finish using the washroom, they pull the stick to wash their hand with the water, then plug the hole back up before running back to class.

We introduced the Leaky Tin Method first to the lower primary school – as our capacity to work with 1,000 students at one time would have been difficult. Gradually, we introduced the teaching to the upper primary levels with the emphasis on basic sanitation. In order to ensure sustainable measure, the Salabwek community created a teacher committee responsible of the Leaky Tin Method and its continual care and usage.



Health

Living a sanitary and healthy lifestyle is increasingly popular in the community. The school has started two health-related clubs: the Health Club and the School Motivators Club. The Health Club trained its members in general first aid, provided a first aid kit and has the overall responsibility of treating people in the school for any minor cuts or scrapes often received at recess. The School Motivators Club ensures that any health training and knowledge taught at school is then transferred to the community, from children to their parents.

The students have had trainings on general health, general hygiene and nutrition. More specifically, training also included how to assist someone with fainting or a seizure, as both often occur on school grounds.

Alternative Income and Community Mobilization

The parent community has also been quite active, particularly the women groups! There is currently twenty women's group formed within the Salabwek community – seen as the most inspiring and respected in the Salabwek community. Each group has created a different purpose for their Merry Go Round, and by using their own resources in this early stage have also demonstrated a certain level of empowerment.

Samples of group activities include:

- *Mwangaza* (Group name meaning 'Enlightenment') has purchased 7 goats and dug 6 pit latrines, with a monthly contribution of 110 shillings each;
- *Kaliet* (Group name meaning 'Unity') has dug 5 pit latrines and bought 17 members two goats each;
- *Salabwek A* has bought a commercial plot to build a store, with a monthly contribution of 1,000 shillings each;
- *Good Shepherd* has purchased 17 heifers, with a monthly contribution of 250 shillings each.



The teachers are currently contemplative over what type of Merry Go Round they would like to initiate next. The projects are working with some of the groups on structure. We have learnt that any successful group must first build a strong foundation with two elements: establishing a common agreement or a "constitution" and secondly establishing a strong group dynamic/teamwork.

Groups have been guided through the areas that need to be covered in reaching a common agreement.

These are:

- *Msingi* Foundation Basics: Name of group, meeting schedule (day of week, time, location of meetings), date constitution was written, and overall objective of the group;
- *Wanachama* Members: Names of group members, name of group leaders, policy for accepting new members, policy for members who want to leave the group;

- *Matoleo* Contributions: financial contribution, purpose of contributions, policy if someone misses a payment, policy if someone misses several payments, defining fines;
- *Kutoa Shida* Conflict Resolution: Creating a conflict resolution committee where no group leader can be a member, allowing the group to move forward in unity once the problem is solved, active listening to all, understanding that the more confidence the group has then the less conflicts there will be;
- *Sahihi* Signatures of Agreement: Each group member must be in attendance during the drafting of the constitution, and each member must indicate their name and sign the agreement;
- *Kuvunja* End of Group: Policy on how the groups divide/share with each members when objectives have been reached;
- Group Dynamics and Group Care: Any group will go through various stages in its lifespan, and it is important for the women to acknowledge that they are never on the wrong path if they are experiencing challenges in their group. Groups were taken through guidelines on how to best nurture group success;
- Group Dynamics: Forming, Performing, etc.;
- Caring for their Group:
 - *Ugomvi* Confidence: the importance of actions that promote confidence in a group including following the constitution, listening and trusting one another, no malicious gossiping or mocking, proving responsible, ensuring volunteer sign up for committees, only speaking the truth and respect for all;
 - *Kumbukumbu* Writing Minutes: Learning the format of how to keep minutes and agendas;
 - *Rekodi* Records of a group: Constitution, meeting minutes, social service certificate, and cashbook.