

## Progress Report

Adopt a Village – Salabwek

Submitted To:

SVQF

Reporting Period: September 2012



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## INTRODUCTION

Free The Children is proud to report back on the growth that was seen in Salabwek and the impact made on the lives of thousands of community members since programming began in 2007. Salabwek has become a model community in the Narok South District, moving forward innovative new alternative income programs, participating in region-wide collaboration initiatives and performing well in national examinations. The support from donors such as SVQF is integral to a thriving community. Thanks in large part to SVQF's support, which made initial significant investments in the Adopt a Village program in Salabwek, development projects continue to move forward and reach out to thousands of people every day, offering them the opportunity to play a critical role in their community's development and sustainable growth.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program	Adopt a Village
Country	Kenya
Program Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access to quality primary education</li> <li>• Provide access to clean and safe water for all community members</li> <li>• Provide access to standard health care facilities and medical resources</li> <li>• Food availability outcomes improve and disease incidence significantly lowered</li> <li>• Increase base family income through sustainable and diversified income generating activities</li> <li>• Increase empowerment and independence of women</li> </ul>
Sectors of Focus	Education, Water and Sanitation, Health Care, Alternative Income
Operational Area	Salabwek, Narok South District, Kenya
Program Period	November 2006 – March 2010
Funding Partner	Sanam Vaziri Quraishi Foundation (SVQF)
Total Budget	\$272,300
Number of Beneficiaries	5,200 <sup>1</sup>
Free The Children Contact	Alexandra Martin, Program Manager

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<sup>1</sup> The total population has remained the same in Salabwek since implementation began in 2007. This number is based on conversations with local chiefs and local officials and is not based on an official census.

## MAP OF SALABWEK AND NAROK SOUTH DISTRICT



## EDUCATION

### Objective

Increase access to quality primary education.

### Impacts

Number of students enrolled and regularly attending	759
Number of boys enrolled	411
Number of girls enrolled	348
Total number of classrooms needed to accommodate the students <sup>2</sup>	20
Number of classrooms built	19
Number of rooms currently under construction	2 <sup>3</sup>
Number of teachers currently employed	22
Number of female teachers	9
Number of male teachers	13
Teachers participating in School Pride Program	22
Total teacher training sessions held	3
Number of external stakeholder meetings	10

Salabwek is thriving and has become a model community in the Narok South District. When Free The Children began working in partnership with Salabwek, an overarching objective was set to guide all future implementation of projects in this community: increase access to quality primary education. Free The Children can proudly say that this has been accomplished in Salabwek. This objective is measured through the following indicators:

- Decrease in the distance children walk to school
- Increase in number of classrooms to accommodate students
- Increase in enrollment and attendance
- Decrease in class sizes
- Increase in number of quality teachers
- Increase in school supplies

Since starting programming in Salabwek, the quality of primary education has improved dramatically. Salabwek was originally the only school in the region, with students walking an average of 3-4 kilometres to get to school every day. Now, because of the amazing reputation of Salabwek primary, the nearest community of Mwangaza has begun working with Free The Children to provide access to education for those young people who live more than 3-4 kilometres away. As a direct result of Mwangaza primary school having opened, even more children from this rural region are able to attend a school in their home community.

The positive reputation of Salabwek primary rests on the fact that 19 new classrooms have been built, furnished, and outfitted with supplies and educational materials, with 8 of those classrooms made possible with support from SVQF. The 20<sup>th</sup> classroom is almost complete, with stone walling completed

<sup>2</sup> Originally, because Salabwek is a feeder school (meaning that this community school has typically absorbed students from neighboring communities), 25 classrooms were planned. Now, only 20 are planned for this community given that more schools have opened up in the region to serve this need.

<sup>3</sup> One classroom and one library are currently under construction in Salabwek.

up to the ring beam level, with roofing planned to commence shortly. 759 pupils are now enrolled in primary school, which is broken down into 411 boys and 348 girls. There is now an average of 30-40 pupils per classroom, which is a significant decrease from years prior where there existed an average of 61-100 pupils per class. In addition, since 2007, dropout rates have decreased from 3 pupils/year to 0 pupils/year at the end of the 2011 school year. Finally, at the end of 2011, the grade 8 students who were applying to attend high school received a mean score of 235.47 on their national examinations, which is an increase from 228.95 in 2010.<sup>4</sup> Also during a recent round of zonal examinations for Grade 8 students from Salabwek, the mean score achieved was 258. Free The Children is extremely proud of this statistic because it speaks to the improved quality of education and supporting programs that enable youth to access education sustainably.

During a recent conversation with the head teacher, Mr. Simon Chebusit, he described the support systems in place for students at Salabwek primary. *“I have high hopes that Salabwek students will achieve 1<sup>st</sup> place in the upcoming national examinations and will win the zonal trophy. I have confidence that we will score well because my colleagues and the students are working hard to prepare. Teachers are supporting the students in every way possible be it teaching and coaching them after the normal class hours and also over the weekends. The community’s support cannot be ignored. They have supported the school through hiring six teachers, to support the faculty members who are employed by the government”.*

The provision of school supplies improves the quality of education and is essential to opening up sustainable access to it. Supplies enrich education and make it possible for all different types of learners to actively participate at school. Originally, children shared textbooks, whereby there was one textbook for every 4 children in lower primary grades, and one textbook for every 3 children in upper primary grades. Now, classrooms are outfitted with necessary supplies.<sup>5</sup>

In Kenya, the government provides Free The Children schools with trained teachers at each school. However, many rural communities experience difficulty recruiting and retaining quality teaching staff because of the poor conditions of schools and the lack of staff accommodations. With increased focus on providing professional development opportunities for teachers, as well as conducive work environments through the construction of staff accommodations at Salabwek in 2009, Free The Children has maintained a team of 22 teachers in Salabwek to provide a supportive education experience for youth in Salabwek.<sup>6</sup> Salabwek has also achieved its target student-teacher ratio as well as opened up involvement in the School Pride Program. In addition to this, educational workshops for teachers are ongoing.

The School Pride Program provides incentives for educators to become more actively engaged in Free The Children programming. The program creates a culture that motivates and attracts the best and brightest teachers to improve student participation and results. It has been extremely successful in helping to prevent teacher apathy and improve teacher retention rates. Salabwek has teacher accommodations that are well utilized, and these coupled with incentive programs creates a positive

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<sup>4</sup> Students are marked out of 500, and trends from across the region show that most children score below 200. Therefore, Free The Children is proud of their scores when they are above 200.

<sup>5</sup> Students are responsible for purchasing their own notebooks, but they are each able to access books without having to share, as these are supplied by the school. We do not distribute texts to each child each year but reuse the books.

<sup>6</sup> There are no current plans to build additional staff accommodations in Salabwek.

and sustainable school environment. At the School Pride Program ceremony held in February, students were awarded for the exemplary performances in the last years' (2011) Kenya Certificate of Primary Education. Salabwek students had also performed well in the below categories and as a result were awarded:

- 1<sup>st</sup> place student mark in social studies in the national examination
- Best school in environment program
- Best school in maintenance and cleanliness

Happily, the school's classrooms are full of bright and engaged young people, ready to learn. During the East African drought, class attendance had been a concern in the school, as many students dropped out of school for menial jobs that would contribute to their households' income.<sup>7</sup> In response to the drought, and to reduce drop-out rates, Free The Children strengthened the nutrition program in the school. In 2012, 61 bags of maize and 17 bags of beans were supplied to Salabwek collectively. The promise of a warm meal motivates students to attend school, and helps them focus on their studies.

It continues to be a busy year in Salabwek, with sports programming rolling out and meetings with government officials to continue to strengthen Salabwek primary; a community that's making it's mark in Kenya.

## WATER AND SANITATION

### Objective

Provide access to clean and safe water for all community members.

### Impacts

Total number of latrines built <sup>8</sup>	16 <sup>9</sup>
Total number of wells built	1
Number of clean water kiosks	1
Number of households with boiling water <sup>10</sup>	331 <sup>11</sup>
Number of households with latrines	121
Number of households with hand washing stations	54
Number of household with water catchment systems	75
Number of water and sanitation awareness workshops held	4 <sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> This speaks to the general trend of decreased school attendance across the region, but not to Salabwek primary specifically. Free The Children strengthened the nutrition program to ensure that Salabwek students were not negatively affected by the drought.

<sup>8</sup> Hand washing stations are built in tandem with latrines at schools. Free The Children is continuing to work with community members and school officials to ensure that these stations are well maintained, with soap and water available at all times.

<sup>9</sup> There are 8 structures with 16 access points in total.

<sup>10</sup> A number of households are utilizing the rain catchment system to obtain water. In this case, water needs to be boiled. Water obtained from the borehole well does not.

<sup>11</sup> Community mobilizers conduct household visits with each women's group to collect information on how many women are implementing the 8 habits of a healthy home, with which boiling water is a part of.

<sup>12</sup> This number is an indication of the number of workshops held over a period of 6 months. It is important to note from this that workshops are being held regularly.

Total number of water and sanitation awareness workshops held	60
Number of women attending awareness workshops	30
Number of students attending water, sanitation and hygiene workshops	1021 <sup>13</sup>

It is evident that community members have taken full ownership of water projects in Salabwek and are committed to ensuring that everyone in the community will have access to clean water, minimizing the risk of waterborne illnesses. When Free The Children first started working in Salabwek, 90% of households did not have access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation facilities, and suffered from water-borne diseases causing illness and death. This was due to the fact that no one in the community lived within 3 kilometres of a clean water source. Now, with the completion of the borehole, 88% of people live within walking distance to clean water.<sup>14</sup>

This increase in access to clean and safe water was made possible through a multifaceted programmatic approach centered around the construction of a borehole well<sup>15</sup>. The completion of this project means that now, clean water is piped to a water kiosk at Salabwek primary and is within close walking distance.

The Water Management Committee continues to play an important role in ensuring that the well, kiosk, generator, water towers and piping network are constantly well-maintained and that there is enough incoming funds to continually support the clean water system. Maintenance and operations officers attended multiple training sessions to familiarize themselves with the new water system. Currently community members pay 2 Kenyan shillings (KSH) per jerry can of water. These fees offset the costs of labour for the water vendor and coordinator, as well as for service and repair of the borehole well generator. To track the flow of water, there is a meter at the well that measures water levels and usage. This integrative system is working well in Salabwek thanks in large part to the growing level of responsibility taken on by the community which makes for a holistic and sustainable project.

Other notable water and sanitation statistics to share from the community include the following:

- The amount of water obtained from the access kiosk went from 0 litres in 2008 to 288050 litres in 2010 to 783470 litres in 2011.
- The percentage of households that regularly practice healthy water-usage habits at home increased from 48% in 2008 to 91% in 2011.
- The number of diagnosed incidences of diarrheal diseases, malaria, legionnaires went from 7 in 2010 to 10 in 2011.<sup>16</sup>
- The number of diagnosed incidences of skin/eye conditions increased from 12 in 2008 to 61 in 2011.

These positive statistics speak to the successes of water and sanitation programming held at both the school and the community level. A clean water access point; works in tandem with the education of women and children to make healthy decisions. Therefore, the entire community thrives. Water

<sup>13</sup> This number is cumulative over time.

<sup>14</sup> Walking distance is defined as being within 3 KM to a water source.

<sup>15</sup> Prior to boreholes, Free The Children provided households with bio sand filters, some of which are still being used in households. However, with the borehole well, the community is able to take ownership over the project together and access to water is much more widespread.

<sup>16</sup> The numbers increased in 2011 since Free The Children was able to effectively screen and track incidence rates in the medical clinic unlike the other years when we were doing mobile clinics only. An increase is seen as positive because once cases are known, Free The Children is better able to address needs in the community and include effective treatment of these diseases.

programming is integrated in women’s groups, as well as in environmental projects to increase the buy-in by multiple stakeholder groups in the community. For example, a new irrigation system was installed at the school farm in 2011. The school is now able to realize a bountiful harvest due to continuous availability of water for the farm. Extra produce from the farm is sold therefore generating extra revenue for the school. On another level, this cross-integration of water in multiple programs (women’s groups, education, school farms) raises awareness of the importance of water thereby promoting responsible use of water.

## HEALTH CARE

### Objective

Provide access to standard health care facilities and medical resources.

### Impacts

# of health awareness days or workshops held for community	3
Total number of health awareness days or workshops held for community	25
Number of students participating in school based environment programs	40
Number of children participating in de-worming program <sup>17</sup>	576 <sup>18</sup>

Salabwek is making progress in becoming a sustainable and dynamic community. Central to this is the community’s health care programming. This pillar encompasses two core components: health education and the provision of health care services. To illustrate that changes have been in seen in the health of the community as a result of health care programming, Free The Children has measured changes in health care access, and learned the following.

- The % of households that regularly practice key healthy habits at home has increased from 45% in 2008 to 89% in 2011.
- The % of children who have regular access to well-prepared, nutritious food has increased from 66% in 2008 to 83% in 2011.
- The % of youth that have been taught healthy habits has increased from 66% in 2008 to 83% in 2011.
- 7% of mothers are receiving post-natal care (as compared to 1% in 2008).
- The number of diagnosed incidences of tuberculosis, measles, pneumonia, brucella, increased from 8 in 2008 to 27 in 2011.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Students receive the mobile health clinic 3 times/year or once each school term.

<sup>18</sup> Number of students dewormed is less then student population as student population numbers are recorded at the beginning of the school year and deworming occurred in February when student population was still fluctuating.

<sup>19</sup> The numbers increased in 2011 since Free The Children was able to effectively screen and track incidence rates in the medical clinic unlike the other years when we were doing mobile clinics only. An increase is seen as positive because once cases are known, Free The Children is better able to address needs in the community and include effective treatment of these diseases.

Regarding health care service provision, Salabwek continues to receive the mobile health clinics where students are treated for parasitic worms. Below are the tabulated statistics of the clinic visit in February:

Grade	Boys	Girls
Nursery	16	25
Class 1	41	40
Class 2	38	38
Class 3	16	25
Class 4	36	29
Class 5	51	56
Class 6	28	42
Class 7	34	32
Class 8	13	16
Total	273	303

In addition to medical treatments, in March, a comprehensive school health exercise was conducted in Salabwek primary school by one nurse and the social worker. The goal was to assess the current state of school health care programs. Activities included:

- School environment and project evaluation with the health patron. Projects evaluated include:
  - Latrines
  - Hand washing stations
  - Classrooms
  - School compound
  - Waste disposal
  - Health education
  - Personal hygiene
- Kitchen and food storage hygiene assessment
- Evaluation of health club progress
- Sensitization around the importance of the chimney project

Programs such as these are important to students and teachers. The buy-in from health care professionals provides incentives for the greater school community to take ownership of projects such as the environment and health clubs, and the school farm.

In addition to inspecting Salabwek primary school, the social worker worked with the women’s group over the summer. The topic of discussion was centered on the 8 habits to a healthy home. Women had the opportunity to share their successes in implementing this program and were encouraged to empower other community members to adopt it as well. Data was also collected from these women based on the 8 indicators and an analysis shows that 76% of these women have implemented 7 of the 8 health indicators.

Implemented last August, the chimney projects have already seen much success. This project is the 8<sup>th</sup> habit of a healthy home<sup>20</sup>. In addition to curbing respiratory infections from smoke inhalation, and greatly reducing risk of fire-related accidents, Salabwek’s chimneys are being used as a model to

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<sup>20</sup> The 8 habits of a healthy home continue to be adopted by families in Salabwek. Free The Children has made them a priority in programming to positively reinforce the education that children are learning in school. The members of the women’s groups are also assisting Free The Children in data collection to evaluate the 8 health indicators and also mobilizing the community to adopt the chimneys in particular.

introduce chimneys in other communities. More and more, community members are opting for chimneys in their homes. As a result of continuous construction, a demonstration on the benefits of the chimney was held in Salabwek. To date, a number of new chimneys have been constructed in Salabwek. In addition to speaking about health indicators, women also took part in a workshop on reproductive health. The social worker outlined the various health care services that are available to women and their families.

Students at Salabwek are also able to get involved in health care programming, even if they are not part of the health clubs. Students are given health kits,<sup>21</sup> and a health contest was recently held with the hopes of enhancing students’ skills and knowledge of primary disease prevention. As a result of this contest, students now know the different ways diseases are contracted and what they can do to prevent them with locally available nutrients.

The importance of making health education and programming accessible to young people and their families cannot be understated. Communities have the capacity to practice disease prevention techniques and take efforts to educate others. Providing the knowledge and tools to do so decreases the burden on local health facilities and increases empowerment among community members.

## AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

### Objective

Food availability outcomes improve and disease incidence significantly lowered.

### Impacts

Number of people who work in kitchen gardens	1120
Number of people who benefit from kitchen gardens	5200
Total number of trees planted	800
Average number of plant varieties planted in kitchen garden	8
Number of people who work in demonstration gardens	40
Number of people benefitting from demonstration gardens	772

One of the most pressing issues directly impacting poverty alleviation is the growing challenge of food security. Food security is the availability of and access to an adequate amount of healthy, nutritious food that meets populations’ dietary needs and food preferences. Food security in turn has an impact on populations’ access to education, their health, their livelihoods and their life outcomes.

Free The Children’s Adopt a Village model continues to evolve and expand to meet the changing needs of community partners. In light of these needs, Free The Children is proud to announce the addition of Agriculture and Food Security as the fifth pillar of Adopt a Village.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Students attending Salabwek primary have received health kits in the past, however the number distributed depends on the number are funded within a budget.

<sup>22</sup> Free The Children is now grouping project activities including farming, nutrition and environment within this pillar.

Some new aspects of programming that will fall under the Agriculture and Food Security pillar include innovative farming techniques and water management projects to help ensure that developing communities have access to self-sustaining food sources, directly impacting their health, access to education and life outcomes.

To usher in this new pillar, community representatives and members of the school management committee were brought together to learn more about food security and investment in agriculture, and the impact that this can have on communities with a new targeted approach by this 5<sup>th</sup> pillar. The training was facilitated by Free The Children's agriculture coordinator, the alternative income coordinator, and the Divisional Livestock Extension Officer of Mulot. Participants went away from this meeting understanding the importance of recognizing food security and agriculture as a separate pillar and are invested in sharing this message to throughout the community and school.

In addition to this training program, Free The Children has assembled agricultural ambassadors. This is a group comprised of a representative from 5 communities who are interested in promoting best agricultural practices through the 5<sup>th</sup> pillar; namely Emori Joi, Enelerai, Motony, Pimbiniyet and Salabwek. The main purpose of this is to work towards increasing food production of appropriate crops in Free The Children supported communities. Program outcomes include:

- To equip members with knowledge and skills to improve their crop production and ensure food security for themselves and their families;
- To prepare members to act as resource persons and facilitators for school farms and gardens to ensure better income generation and sustainability of the school feeding programme;
- To equip the members with information, knowledge and skills that they shall disseminate to members of their communities to help improve crop production and ensure food security and better income generation from the farms.

At Salabwek primary, the environmental club members are becoming very active in the implementation of activities that promote the environment, food security, and agricultural training and development. Teachers are utilizing environment education curriculum that was developed by Free The Children to aid in teaching the students about how to sustainably develop the environment.

As an extension of this curriculum, students are able to practice what they're learned in the demonstration garden at the school. The demonstration garden that the Salabwek school environmental club has planted on school grounds is comprised of a vegetable nursery bed growing peas, cassava, sweet potatoes, beans, and butternuts, sweet potatoes veins, sorghum, cassava cuttings and butternut seeds. The garden supports the school's nutrition program which ensures that all students are given a healthy and filling lunch so they can focus on learning. The garden also serves as a practical learning experience for all Salabwek community members. After learning best agricultural practices and farming techniques, the community replicates what they see in the demonstration garden on their own land and gardens, ensuring they too are getting the nutrition they need.

The environmental club members have become particularly involved with the maintenance of this garden. Members not only influence the rest of the students to take part in maintaining the garden, but also, ensuring that their garden is a demonstration to the community, teachers and fellow pupils in enhancing food security. During august, the club members working in with the garden in the following ways:

- Digging 176 holes that are 1.5ft deep and 30cm in diameter to plant butternut squash.

- Harvesting sorghum to be sold to the local market and purchasing more diverse crop seeds such as kale with the profits.
- Planning the purchase of a dairy cow from the modest income generated by the garden.
- Harvesting cowpeas to be cooked and provided to students and teachers for lunch, hence supplementing the school feeding program.

The school farm program is one of the ways through which Free The Children is working in partnership with the school management committee to ensure food sufficiency and sustainability in schools. There has been tremendous success at the school farm, owing to the purchase of a dairy cow and an efficient irrigation system. The drip irrigated farm is managed by the school management committee.<sup>23</sup> In addition to being able to purchase surplus harvest from the school farm at a reduced price, community members also have the opportunity to learn about vegetable growing. The Salabwek school farm is being used as a model for other schools in the Narok South District. Each month, over 200 community members come together to take part in practical skills-based training on effective farming techniques. Some topics covered include identifying different varieties of local vegetables, farm management as well as crop rotation.

The School management committee has been successful in ensuring that the school farm is taken care of. The committee has hired a gardener to work there full time to take care of the farm and to ensure that it is productive throughout the year.<sup>24</sup> This individual is responsible for doing research on local markets to sell produce to, as well as acts as a resource person to the community members who frequent the farm not only to purchase harvests but also to learn.

In addition, Salabwek’s mamas are working together in their own gardens to use rain water effectively in their gardens and are focused on growing drought-resistant crops of vegetables like sweet potatoes, and short-term crops of beans and tomatoes among other vegetables.

## ALTERNATIVE INCOME

### Objective

Increase base family income through sustainable and diversified income generating activities.

### Impacts

Number of alternative income beneficiaries	1600 <sup>25</sup>
Number of women’s groups formed <sup>26</sup>	10
Number of training sessions/month	41
Average number of women attending each session/group	13
Number of groups in Phase 1	2 <sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> The school management committee represents the community on matters of educational programming and support within the school. They ensure that the community’s’ voice is heard and represented when it comes to decisions made about the education of their children.

<sup>24</sup> This gardener is paid for by the community, as his position was created out of the will of the community and school management committee.

<sup>25</sup> This is inclusive of women and their families. There is an average of 16 women in each group.

<sup>26</sup> This number has remained steady at 10 since 2010, however at the beginning of working in a community; the number of women’s groups may be greater, due to the initial attraction of a new project and program.

Number of groups in Phase 2	2
Number of groups in Phase 3	6
Average yearly income before alternative income programming begun	1.1
Average yearly income after alternative income programming begun	1.2

Free The Children is pleased to report back on progress made in alternative income programs in Salabwek. In measuring the impact in the community, it is clear that the women and men of Salabwek are committed to supporting the growth and development of their families through economic opportunity projects. Since 2007, the number of households participating in activities designed to produce alternative income has risen to 33%<sup>28</sup>. Also, 9.5% of the community's income has been invested in savings methods and Salabwek has seen a 15% growth in household income over the course of 5 years. These numbers speak to the community's success and determination. Alternative income programming in Salabwek continues to flourish through collaborative and new economic opportunities.

The Kipsigis women groups from a number of Free The Children communities (Emori Joi, Enelera, Motony, Pimbini, and Salabwek) had an opportunity to visit the Oloosioyi Maasai women groups for a cultural exchange and learning. The group representatives were shown some of the alternative income activities being practiced by the Maasai women at both at individual and group level. They included but were not limited to an irrigation system for vegetables, dairy goat breeding, bee keeping, local poultry keeping and beading. The afternoon session covered leadership training, record keeping, enterprise selection by Free The Children team members and cultural exchanges. This visit was very successful in promoting cross-cultural exchange and harmony among women who are leaders in their community.

Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) address the financial needs of rural communities in the developing world. VSLAs are comprised of self-managed groups that work by pooling the savings of the group members. They provide people with a safe place to save their money, access small loans and contribute to a welfare fund that members can draw on at any time of the night or day in cases of emergency. The sums saved and borrowed are not large but are on a scale that makes a real difference to the lives of the group members. The loans taken out may be used to help start fledgling businesses or help families meet sudden cash needs. The interest paid on the loans is shared out amongst all the group members as interest on their savings.

In Salabwek, two groups are implementing a VSLA, namely Saunok and Good Shepherd. The former, a group of 16 members, shared all of their savings totaling 53,320 KSH, and over the course of the year has seen an interest rate of 17.9%, thus each person's contribution of 100 KSH has increase to 117 KSH after one year. Also, a full day training session was held by Free The Children's alternative income program coordinator for all VSLA group chair people, secretaries and treasurers. The workshop covered the following topics:

- VSLA vs. Merry-Go-Round
- Business skills
- Conflict resolution
- Project ownership and sustainability

As a result of this participatory training, the members of the Saunok group learned many practical skills and for example, are now able to conduct their meetings on their own. This is a true sign of a move

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<sup>27</sup> These are new groups, and/or could be up to 1 year old.

<sup>28</sup> Women's groups are engaging in the following economic activities: irrigation system implementation, dairy goat breeding, bee keeping, local poultry keeping and beading.

towards self-sustainability. The second group, Good Shepherd, has yet to start saving but is making great progress, however it won't be long before they are seeing similar success to Saunok.

At times, women's groups come together to form one large group to foster solidarity among women across the community and share lessons learned and best practices in forming groups, building trust, among other things. These groups do this on their own volition and Free The Children has not facilitated this in the past. It is a testament to the ownership of the individual groups and their will to be successful in future activities.

In Salabwek, youth have also been active in alternative income programming. In particular, they have become quite involved with tree planting initiatives. They are currently doing a merry go round whereby each group member is contributing 20 KSH every week. The group is working towards the establishment of a tree nursery and some have been contributing their share of the merry go round to this fund. The group is learning quickly about the benefits of this program and will be mentors to their peers as they share these benefits and are able to generate interest in alternative income programs in the future.

Free The Children's alternative income program in Kenya has largely focused on empowering women with access to skills and resources to lift their families out of poverty. However, the organization started to talk to men in the communities and learned that they too were interested in engaging in similar initiatives. Although there have been instances where men have worked together on special farming projects, our new Village Savings and Loans Association is the first alternative income program of its kind that will reach men in all the Kenyan communities with which Free The Children works.

As the project is still in its beginning stages, men are currently organizing themselves into small groups and receiving thorough training on the operation of the Village Savings and Loans program. The men's group has had 20 group workshops so far, and is well attended by all of its 15 members. The topics of these training workshops include financial bookkeeping, leadership, roles and responsibilities of members, farm budgeting, loan management skills, time management as a resource, and much more. These workshops are meant to provide community members with the knowledge and skills to make the most effective use of their loan.

Working with men's groups and women's groups separately is integral to promoting sustainable economic growth in small communities. Often times, development work does not address the root issues facing women and men. Progress made in alternative income programming for women and men can take time, but they impacts on the family system are widespread, and promote the empowerment and independence of women for years to come.

## **Cross-cutting Theme: Gender Equality**

### **Objective**

Increase empowerment and independence of women.

Critical to breaking the cycle of poverty is the active inclusion of girls and boys in education. In Kenya, girls are more likely to be kept out of school to do chores (such as water collection), and if a family has money to send only some of its children to school, they are more likely to send the boys. Because of this, enrollment and retention of female students was made a priority. Measures included:

- Appropriate sanitary facilities
- Location of water kiosks at school
- Educational programming on the importance of education for girls
- Education stakeholder meetings to promote women's visibility and voice in decision-making

Because of these action items, the percentage of female students rose from 48% to the current 53%, and women are becoming a more prominent presence in society, whereby they are organizing and chairing meetings, piloting VSLA groups and earning an income for the very first time. These positive steps are part of a growing momentum in Narok South District.

To respond to this growing momentum in Kenya, the Kisaruni all-girls secondary school was built. Girls from Free The Children supported communities will have the opportunity to attend a beautiful and safe school, built only for them. There are 12 students in total from Salabwek attending Kisaruni; 2 in form 2 and 10 in form 1. These girls are becoming part of a new generation of Kenyan women, who will take ownership over the growth of their communities. With support from Free The Children, and of women from neighboring communities, they will continue to increase their sense of empowerment and independence.

## CONCLUSION

As shown throughout this report, Salabwek has become a model community in the Narok South District in Kenya. Projects will continue to be implemented through 2012 to support the infrastructure that was made possible with support from SVQF, but it was that initial investment made in Salabwek and the trust placed in Free The Children that has put community members in a strong position to realize their rights, work together and lift themselves out of poverty.