

J. A. Clark Charitable Trust

Guidelines for Final Project Report

Registered Charity No. 1010520

Please provide us with the information requested below to help us understand what you have achieved over the lifetime of the project and what you have learnt. We like reports that are brief and jargon free and no more than 10 pages in length. We want to know about the impact on beneficiaries and would like data. This report should cover the entire project period. If you have any questions please call or email Daniela.

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| Project Name | Ending FGM/C in the Loita Hills, Kenya |
| Organisation Name | SPONSORED ARTS FOR EDUCATION (SAFE) |
| Project Start Date | APRIL 2014 |
| Project End Date | MARCH 2017 |

1. What problem did you seek to address? *Provide a brief description of the problem and restate your project objectives.*

Since the beginning of the JA Clark Trust grant SAFE Maa have concentrated in earnest on transitioning their community from FGM/C (in 2010 at the start of the project it was practiced by 99% of the community) towards the Alternate Rite of Passage (ARP). SAFE Maa use a combination of Public performances to create and spark a debate around the issue, workshops with different sections of the community for in-depth discussions, school health clubs, one on one meetings with community members and interventions with individual families planning to cut their daughters. The SAFE Maa team's objective has been to challenge the cultural norm that perpetuates the practice of the mutilation of young girls.

2. Who did you help? *Please give a brief description of your main beneficiary groups, how many you were intending to help and how many you did help. Please take care not to double count beneficiaries.*

The Loita Hills is home to approximately 40,000 people. SAFE Maa targets the whole community in different ways depending on age and gender, this approach is important due to the strict structure of Maasai society. In order for sustainable change to be achieved, there needs to be a community wide decision to abandon the practice. Multiple approaches are used therefore there is inevitably some double counting of beneficiaries, as some audience members for the performances will have participated in workshops. And some of these might have then been involved in one on one discussions. It would be impossible to separate these beneficiaries.

BENEFICIARIES BY INTERVENTION

- Performance Tours reaching 25,185 Beneficiaries
- 15 women's workshops reaching 478 beneficiaries
- Specific TBA/ Circumciser Workshops – 108 beneficiaries
- 10 men's workshops reaching 208 beneficiaries
- 9 Moran workshops reaching 109 beneficiaries
- 2 Youth Forums reaching 228 out of school youth
- 16 school health clubs reaching 1,036 beneficiaries

- Women's focus group - 12 participants reaching 440 beneficiaries in their communities
- Community event with 1500 beneficiaries
- Family one on ones with SAFE Maa staff, reaching approximately 1,248 people. - (This is calculated by the chief female outreach officers having on average 5 one on one sessions per week and the chief male outreach officer having 3 per week. However, the number is likely to be higher because the staff often join in on community meetings in more informal settings to promote the abandonment of FGM/C.)
- Community meetings (community leaders, chiefs etc) reaching 600 participants

3. How did you help them? *What were your key activities and interventions?*

PERFORMANCES

The key intervention has been the performance tours which target large numbers of people at one time. They include culturally appropriate performances of Maasai song and story to begin debate and discussion around FGM/C. These performances make it possible for the community to discuss what was previously considered to be a taboo subject, by providing a vocabulary to vocalise the arguments about abandonment. The initial performance consisted of two groups of men and women, one group singing in favour of FGM/C, and the other group in favour of abandonment. They interrupt each other during the performance and the abandonment group win over some of the opposing team. The remaining traditionalists are then invited to at least discuss the issue. This format allowed all sides of the argument to be presented on stage, avoiding the danger of SAFE Maa being seen to be dictating to the community what they should do.

This performance has now been joined by the new SAFE Moran (Warrior) group who started their performances in November 2016. The morans are critical in the abandonment campaign. Not only are they the future husbands of the girls approaching graduation, they are also seen as guardians of the culture. For them to be singing about the desire to marry uncut girls is proving extremely powerful.

WORKSHOPS

Targeted workshops with different sections of the community follow the tour. The beneficiary groups are: Elder Men, Elder Women and the Circumcisers, the Warriors (Morans) and young in and out of school youth.

Elder Men hold most power and influence in the community, SAFE Maa had to receive permission from the Council of Elders before being allowed to commence performances and discussion of the issue. The elder men are some of the most resistant to change, they worry about the loss of their culture and have deep seated beliefs about uncut women, with the fear of promiscuity high on their list.

Men make the final decision on the type of rite of passage their daughters undergo, therefore, during the programme, new strategies were implemented to challenge men during workshops in order to engage with them more fully on this issue. These strategies have included further talks about sexual pleasure and information sharing about the formation of the genitals in order to put into perspective the pain that women go through during the cut, being similar to the pain a man would feel if he was mutilated in a similar way.

Many Elder Women also believe the practice should continue. However, the SAFE Maa team report that they are more willing to shift their opinions than men. They are accepting that they have been mutilated and denied sexual pleasure, and are moving more readily to a desire for the alternate rite.

The Moran (warrior) workshops were critical to the later stages of the programme carried out with the grant, as it was from these workshops that the SAFE Moran singing group was created. This group started their moranship in 2014 after the last group graduated to junior elders (the Eunoto ceremony). SAFE Maa's strategy has been to engage them fully from the moment they emerge due to their critical status in the future of young girls, and the growing influence this age set will have in their community over the next seven to ten years.

During the Moran workshops, SAFE Maa selected young men who clearly understood the dangers of FGM/C and who by the end of the workshops were advocating for change, and brought them together to form SAFE Moran.

SCHOOL HEALTH CLUBS

SAFE Maa has run school clubs throughout the duration of the grant, initially, these were run in all the schools in Loita. This has been reduced due to lack of commitment from some of the schools (see below in 'Challenges'). Tag Rugby, unknown in Loita, is successfully used to attract students to attend the sessions. The yearly curriculum covers not just FGM/C, but also sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, Loita Maasai history and the importance of the Loita forest and ways to protect their environment.

YOUTH FORUMS

This is an annual event timed to coincide with the December school holidays, and attracts both in and out of school youth. These two day workshops educate the youth on all aspects of FGM/C. The 2016 event was unfortunately cancelled due to conflict with youth representatives who demanded money to facilitate the gathering of the youth. This expectation is due to politicians paying young men to congregate to support their rally's in the run up to the August 2017 election. SAFE Maa plans to start a dialogue with these youths in order to hold the event this year.

FOCUS GROUP/SUB LOCATION REPRESENTATIVES

A network of twelve voluntary SAFE Maa location representatives was formed during the grant. They are all women and are a good channel of information for SAFE Maa's outreach team. They identify families who are approaching the decision about rite of passage for their daughter, then inform the outreach team who are able to offer help and support. This crucial local knowledge on individual families has enabled successful interventions.

ONE ON ONE INTERVENTIONS

One on one interventions are carried out by our outreach team. They are the most constant of all of our interventions as they are able to continue during unpredictable weather and occasional inter-tribal conflicts. These meetings are invaluable in helping families make a decision to not cut their daughters. In the run up to the December cutting season one on one meetings become even more critical and SAFE Maa outreach officers will visit the same families repeatedly to discuss the ARP. These involve members of the SAFE Maa team giving families information on FGM/C and supporting them through their decision making process.

4. What did the project achieve? What changed for the beneficiaries? *Please distinguish between intended and unintended consequences and state to what extent you have achieved the project objectives. Do include your key indicators and demonstrate the progress made against the baseline, briefly describe the source of your evidence.*

The one clear objective of the programme is to stop FGM/C in favour of the alternate rite of passage (ARP). At the end of year one 20% of girls underwent the ARP. This was an increase on the previous year when 10% of girls underwent the ARP. However, in year two, although the ARP rate increased in some areas, overall it remained at 20%. This was disappointing for the team and adjustments to the

programme were made to try and overcome resistance. In year three the ARP rate during the December 2016 cutting season increased again to just over 30% of girls who were spared the cut.

The shift in attitudes has exceeded expectations; even families that still cut their daughters are accepting that change is coming. Many have transitioned to the lesser 'Kisasa' cut, which although billed by the circumcisers as just a tiny symbolic cut, is believed in most cases to be type one circumcision (clitorectomy). In December 2016 only 10% of girls receive the full traditional cut that was universal at the beginning of the project. This is a terrific achievement; the struggle now is to move those families that transitioned to type 1 'Kisasa' onwards to the ARP.

5. What worked well? *Consider project design and relevance to the context, management practices, specific interventions.*

The performance of Maasai song to start the debate has been a huge success. Activists, including Maasai women from other communities, had attempted to educate the Loita Maasai on the dangers of FGM/C without success in the past. They were always chased from the area, with community members rejecting angrily what they considered to be outside intervention in their culture. The SAFE Maa performance by members of their own community in Maasai song, is seen as respectful and non-judgemental by the community. It has opened the door to a discussion and makes the community feel that a change is coming from within their community. It is also an extremely effective recruitment tool for the workshops that follow the performance.

If the performance opens the door to the issue, the workshops have proved critical in getting people to walk through that door; a high percentage of the families that opt for the ARP have participated in SAFE Maa workshops. Gender specific workshops proved effective, allowing frank discussions about sexual pleasure and the politics of sex that would never be allowed in a mixed gender setting.

For most of the women participants, the workshop is the first time that they will have openly talked about sex with a group. This discussion is essential for the women's acknowledgement of the importance of sexual pleasure and how the cut can limit it. The team estimate that at least 25% of the women who leave the workshop will have agreed to move to ARP, with the remaining women saying they will move to Kisasa, although with a view to moving to ARP in the future.

In the men's workshops, the facilitation aspect allows the men to understand issues and go on to have conversations with their wives that they would not have previously been able to have. This has opened up other conversations between married couples that previously would have been impossible to discuss, involving issues other than FGM/C, such as family planning.

The school health clubs have proved effective at reaching girls as they approach graduation age. Many families state that the decision to not cut a girl can be influenced by the girls demands. Arming girls with all the facts about FGM/C gives them far more ammunition in the debate with their parents. School health clubs have also been important in the education of the boys about their role in bringing about change for the girls. In this patriarchal society, sending these boys out from school fully educated about FGM/C is vital.

The success of the school health clubs is due to the varied curriculum and the equal split between male and female students in the classes (each club has fifteen boys and fifteen girls). This is important, because it shows absolute equality between the sexes, an important message that SAFE Maa promotes in all of their activities. The range of the curriculum has also helped the success of the school programme. The introduction of tag rugby, as well as lessons about Maasai History keeps the students engaged and involved. The students have reported high levels of enjoyment.

The sub location representatives have been successful at alerting SAFE Maa staff to families that are approaching the decision on whether or not to cut their daughters sometimes outside of the traditional

cutting season. Representatives can also be a point of contact for people who wish to discuss the issue more fully. These community members can then be passed on to a SAFE Maa outreach officer to continue the discussion.

The one on one interventions are often the point when a family decides not to cut their daughter. The fear that their child (and even the entire family) will be rejected by the community and that she will be unable to secure herself a husband, weigh heavily on minds of families. Sustained and private sessions with outreach staff give them the courage to opt for the ARP.

As mentioned above, the SAFE Moran team are the newest weapon against FGM/C. The interest in the young team when they perform is enormous. At their first performance in Ilkerin market, the largest market of the week, people came running and crowded around them in huge numbers as they started their song. Although it will be December 2017 (the cutting season) before SAFE can properly assess the effectiveness of this part of the intervention, the enthusiasm and interest in their performance and the anecdotal feedback from community members suggests it could significantly impact the decision of families as they approach the cutting season.

6. What challenges did you face and how did you respond to them?

A challenge that we met at the beginning of the project was getting men to take responsibility for their part in promoting FGM/C. They would claim that FGM/C was a woman's issue and had nothing to do with them. The women were publicly for the cut, which concealed the men's role in promoting FGM/C. But as the women started to be educated and push for change, it became clear that the men were the ones who held the power. It became obvious it was not a 'woman's issue' as the men had previously insisted. The men in almost all cases make the final decision on the type of rite of passage their daughter undergoes. The decision by many men to cut their daughters appears to be taken lightly, with little understanding of the physical and emotional risks involved. He often has little knowledge of the risk to the life of a baby and the mother when a circumcised woman gives birth. During the final year of the project the workshops have involved deeper discussions around sexual pleasure, clitoral orgasm, and lessons on the formation of the sexual organs in the womb. Therefore showing the similarity between the nerve endings in the clitoris and the penis.

The other main challenge is the community's hesitation to transition from Kisasa to the ARP. Approximately 60% of the community have transitioned to Kisasa, and while this cut is not as dangerous it is still mutilation and a violation of the girl's human rights. In most cases it is a full removal of the clitoris (type one circumcision). The challenge is now to transition these families to the ARP. Details of our strategy will be explained on our re-application form.

SAFE Maa met with some challenges implementing the school programme. Originally, all the schools in Loita were included but some of them had to be dropped because of the teachers were not cooperating fully. The team felt they could be more productive in less schools, therefore the number of schools reduced from 17 to 9. Another school challenge is the strict guidelines implemented by the new Minister for Education that allows less time for any extra curricular activities. To overcome this challenge the team are making the school programme more flexible to fit in with the timetable.

The hostile climatic environment is a constant challenge. Heavy rain makes roads impassable making much of the work impossible to implement in the rainy seasons. The recent drought also presented challenges to the implementation of our work as many community members were forced to leave the Loita Hills in order to survive because water became so scarce.

Conflict with the Sonjo tribe across the border in Tanzania also delayed or stopped work. During the project a cattle raid on a boma (homestead) close to the SAFE Maa office resulted in a woman being shot through the shoulder and the baby she was carrying on her back being injured. In revenge three Sonjo

men were killed even though there was no evidence that they were involved in the raid. The resulting tensions made SAFE Maa's work difficult to complete as per the schedule.

As discussed in previous reports the lack of education on the Tanzanian side of the border remains a continuing problem slowing down SAFE Maa's progress in the area. Additional funds will have to be sought to enable SAFE Maa to operate on the Tanzanian side of the border. This will involve securing work permits for the SAFE Maa team and navigating complex bureaucracy on the Tanzanian side.

7. What did you learn?

While men have claimed (along with the women) that the cut is a way of cleansing the woman, of making her an adult, and allowing her to fully participate in cultural ceremonies, when pushed, the fear of promiscuity and unfaithfulness remains a key reason for maintaining the cut. Undoubtedly this was the reason that mutilation began centuries ago, and as the community gradually reject the practice, it once again is cited as a concern for fathers and husbands.

The female staff have learnt to strongly reject the notion that uncut women are more promiscuous. This has been achieved through observing uncut girls in the community who are happily married and do not hold a negative reputation. They have also seen cut women in the community who have been highly promiscuous, thus disproving the theory that there is a connection between promiscuity and being cut.

The female staff have also learnt that it is possible to engage in personal conversations with older women. During the workshops, they were initially nervous at discussing such sensitive subjects with older women, however, they found them to be not only receptive but enthusiastic to talk about sex and what the cut had denied them over the years.

One of the most important lessons the male SAFE Maa have learnt is the importance of standing up for what you believe, regardless of societal pressure. Both the Junior Elders and the Moran's experienced ridicule from other members in their age set for discussing what is believed to be a women's issue. However, over the last three years, this ridicule has turned to respect. The men report that they are proud to have started the conversation even though it was a challenge.

8. How did your project contribute to the personal/political/economic empowerment of the women beneficiaries?

Our project contributed to the economic empowerment of women by employing four senior female staff, one of whom is employed in the role of project manager. The gender parity within the organisation sends a powerful message to women and girls in the community. SAFE Maa's female staff are role models for the entire community. They have made it the norm for women to have a voice in the community, not only talking about FGM/C, but girls' education also. This is extremely powerful for the schoolgirls.

SAFE Maa female staff also report a great deal of personal development as a result of their jobs. They now have the knowledge and courage to speak up front of all groups in society, including men. This is because they know what they are saying is right and having a position within SAFE Maa gives them the support they need to continue.

This personal development also extends to the female representatives who operate in the villages. They now have the power to talk publicly about FGM/C and other issues that affect women. They are able to call a meeting and people will attend. In the patriarchal society that exists in Loita, giving the women the confidence to speak up is one of the projects key successes.

The women's workshops are giving girls the control to make decisions regarding their own bodies, especially when it comes to FGM/C. Allowing them to make this decision, empowers them to seek the

right to also make the decision of when they get married and have children. The schools programme has allowed girls to start this conversation with their parents, equipped with the correct information.

The programme has contributed to the political development of women in the Loita region. One of the women who attended the workshops, Noolosiyio Enole Narok, was nominated by the Chief to join the area local council. The council is involved the development of the area and she was nominated a result of the work she had done with SAFE.