

J. A. Clark Charitable Trust

Progress Report Guidelines

Registered Charity No. 1155626

We know that writing reports to donors can be a time consuming activity for charities that takes them away from their real work. Therefore we would like to make reporting on progress as easy as possible for you. Please provide us with the information requested below to help us understand the progress you are making. We like brief and jargon free and expect the narrative report to be around 5 pages in length. We are interested in the impact on beneficiaries and like data. Please call or email and ask for advice if you're stuck.

Project Name	FGC Abandonment in the Loita Hills
Organisation Name	SAFE Maa (S.A.F.E.)
Project Start Date	1 st September 2018
Project End Date	31 st August 2021
Reporting Period	1 st September 2019 – 31 st August 2020

1. What are your main achievements to date? Give details of number of beneficiaries reached and any changes that have occurred in their lives as a result e.g. increase in income per person.

At the beginning of the reporting period, SAFE Maa set the objective of using the community activities to promote the Loita Rite of Passage (LRP) and spread the messages from the February 2019 Declaration of Abandonment. Activities were carried out as planned for the first six months of the project:

Community Workshops X 6: 259 participants

Leaders Meetings X 5: 101 participants

Performance Tours X 1: 1210 audience members

Youth Forums X 2: 422 participants

One on one interventions: 220 participants

In March 2020, Kenya announced its first case of COVID-19, subsequently, the government imposed restrictions to slow the spread of the virus, banning meetings of large groups of people, restricting travel, closing hospitality venues and places of worship, and imposing a curfew. Other containment measures such as handwashing, mask wearing and social distancing were also put into place. As such, SAFE Maa had to adapt their programme to keep in line with the government's restrictions and ensure the safety of both the staff and community members. Workshops were done with younger groups in smaller numbers, large leaders meetings were suspended to protect the elderly participants, and leaders were engaged in small groups within their locations, and the performance tours were also suspended. An increased emphasis was put on outreach work which could be carried out without gathering large groups and without the need for team members to travel.

Reduced participant workshops X 12: 340 participants

Reduced participant youth forums X 40: 744 participants

Leadership engagement: 30 Leaders

Outreach work SAFE Maa: 1774

Outreach work SAFE Moran: 1489

Total beneficiaries reached: 6589

Despite the significant disruption caused by the COVID-19 lockdowns, the SAFE Maa team had some significant achievements during the period:

Feedback from the (pre COVID-19) leader's meetings has shown that there is an increasing acceptance of the LRP within Loita. Community Members who want to embrace the LRP are now doing it openly, and the ceremonies are being well attended by friends and neighbours. Those who had previously graduated their daughters through the LRP have even had 'coming out' celebrations to let everyone know that their daughter passed into adulthood uncut. Additionally, the social acceptance of FGC is decreasing. Those who are practicing publically will not have any guests in attendance to celebrate with them. In one location within Loita, the cutting season data showed that there was now a 50% split of Kisasa (Type 1) and the LRP.

Feedback from the community showed that there had been a reduction in the overall rate of FGC. During the February leaders meeting, the team were told that fewer families had made the decision to graduate their daughter causing the overall number of girls who were being cut to reduce. A significant proportion of those who are moving away from this cultural rite are Christians, who have been banned by their church from practicing any form of Maasai culture. However, there are also an increasing number of families, independent of the church who are choosing to focus on education. A third group is those who are delaying the decision, many wanting to practice the LRP, but are waiting to see others do it first and for their daughters to be fully accepted by the community as women. The community have fed back that the message of zero tolerance to FGC came through from the declaration, much clearer than the Cultural Leaders blessing of the ARP, showing the importance of the team's continued education about the blessing.

Quick and effective pivoting of SAFE Maa's activities, to ensure that messaging about the LRP continued throughout the COVID-19 lockdowns. SAFE Maa changed the design of the activities to be compliant with the restrictions, limiting the workshop and meeting attendee numbers to ten, holding the activities outside, and ensuring facemasks were worn and hand washing facilities were properly utilised. The team also focused on youth, to protect the older and more vulnerable members of the community. Because the team included COVID-19 information into their workshops they were able to gain permission from the County Government to continue with their activities. They also created a [COVID-19 verse](#) which was shared with the community via WhatsApp. These adjustments allowed the team to continue promoting the LRP throughout the lockdown period.

SAFE Maa and the Loita community leadership prioritised the protection of girls during the long school closures. Global FGC activists expressed concern that the COVID-19 lockdowns, especially the school closures would put girls at an acute risk of FGC. Activists worried that with an emphasis on COVID-19, governments and local authorities would not have the capacity to police cases of violence against women and girls. This situation would be made worse by reduced family income, forcing families to marry their daughters in order to receive the bride price. Responding to these concerns, outreach officers held small meetings and one on one interventions with community leaders and parents throughout the lock downs,

talking about the importance of protecting girls and ensuring that they are able to return to school when they reopen in 2021.

Fortunately, the Loita Community did not experience this large increase in FGC. Over the period from March to August only nine cases of FGC were discovered, all of which were Kisasa.

Close engagement and observed attitudinal change amongst the youth. At the youth activities throughout the year, the team observed that the female youth are responding positively but cautiously to the LRP, reporting that it is their preferred way to graduate to adulthood, but they are still worrying about their marriageability and bullying from other girls if they are uncut. At the beginning of the year, the male youth were hesitant to discuss FGC, insisting that it was a girl's issue and were not willing to accept marrying uncut girls, worrying about the reaction of their families if they did. However, the extended lockdowns and resulting increase in activities with the youth enabled the team to have a deeper intervention with the male youth. In activities towards the end of the period, the male youth were enthusiastically encouraging their female counterparts to embrace the LRP, committing that they would be prepared to marry uncut girls. This was a significant step forward, as the future husbands of girls of cutting age, these boy's commitment to the LRP will increase the confidence of their female peers in the ceremony.

2. Please provide information about activities undertaken during the **reporting period** by reporting against your **work-plan**. Where you have not completed an action please tell us why and by when you will complete these activities. You can adapt your work-plan as follows.

Activity	When (planned)	Comments (activity completed?)
Performance Tour	September	Completed as per plan
Cultural Leaders Meeting	October	Completed as per plan
Women's leaders meeting	October	Completed as per plan
Olderkesi Leaders Meeting	November	Completed as per plan
Youth Forum Ilkerin	November	Completed as per plan
Youth Forum Entersekera	November	Completed as per plan
Joint leaders meeting	December	Completed (additional to plan)
Internal Evaluation (cutting season)	January	Completed as per plan
Feedback and planning meeting	February	Completed in January
External Evaluation	January	Not completed (pushed backwards by other donor)
Joint Leaders Meeting	February	Completed as per plan
Community Workshop	March	Completed in February
Community Workshop	March	Completed in February
Community Workshop	March	Completed in February
Community Workshop	March	Completed in February
Community Workshop	March	Completed in February
Community Workshop	March	Completed as per plan
COVID-19 Pandemic outbreak		
Youth Forum x 4	March	Additional – COVID Adaptation
Community Workshop	March	Completed as per plan (reduced participants)
Community Workshop	March	Completed as per plan (reduced participants)
Performance Tour	April	Not able to complete due to COVID

Youth forum x 8	Not in Plan	Completed in April – COVID Adaptation
Community workshop	May	Completed in April (reduced Participants)
Community workshop	May	Completed in April (reduced participants)
Community Workshop	May	Completed in April (reduced participants)
Youth Forums x 8	Not in plan	Completed in May – COVID Adaptation
Community Workshop	May	Completed as per plan (Reduced participants)
Community Workshop	May	Completed as per plan (Reduced participants)
Community Workshop	June	Completed in May (Reduced Participants)
Youth Forums x 8	Not in plan	Completed in June COVID Adaptation
Community workshop	June	Completed as per plan
Community workshop	June	Completed as per plan
Community workshop	June	Completed as per plan
Community workshop	June	Completed as per plan
Performance tour	July	Not able to complete due to COVID
Youth Forums x 8	Not in Plan	Completed in July
Youth Forums x 4	August	Completed as per plan (reduced participants)
Staff training	Not in Plan	Completed in August
Morans Graduation Activities	Not in Plan	Completed in August – COVID Adaptation
Leaders One on One interventions	Not in Plan	Completed in August – COVID Adaptation

One on one interventions continued throughout the period.

3. How have you monitored the project’s progress? How do you know you are making progress towards achieving the outputs and outcomes?

SAFE Maa measure the progress of the project through community feedback mechanisms:

Activity Narrative Reports: These reports track and record the flow and nature of the dialogue within the workshops, forums and meetings. The outreach staff running the workshops record notable statements made during the activity, as well as noting down their own observations. These conversations are a reflection of the dialogue that is happening in the wider community, and help the team to understand what the most prevalent opinions within the community are.

Outreach Officer Reports: Outreach activities have been the most consistent and effective of the activities during this period due to the significant disruption caused by COVID-19. Therefore, S.A.F.E. improved the reporting of this activity, introducing a monthly outreach report for each of the outreach officers. Those who were not able to provide written reports dictate an oral report of their month’s work to the Project Officer.

Leadership Engagement: The cultural leaders and the TBA’s continue to be the project’s most active stakeholder group. Periodic meetings with this leadership group enable the team to get another perspective of the change happening in each of the different zones. Each zone has its own unique successes and challenges, and the guidance provided by this group ensures that the team’s work is meeting the needs of each section of the community. To ensure their safety, SAFE Maa are now meeting this group in smaller groups within their locations, to limit their travel and to limit and exposure to other people.

Cutting season evaluations: Although cases of FGC happen throughout the year, the so called ‘cutting season’ (December – January) is when most graduations take place as families take advantage of the long school holidays to perform the cut, allowing their daughter enough time to recover before the schools start again. Each year, the SAFE Maa outreach officers collect information on the number of cases, and which type of cut the girls went through. This is one of the key indicators of progress for the project.

The following data was collected by the teams over January and February:

	Olmesutie	Olorte	Entersekera	Ilkerin	Morijo	Total	
Traditional	2	6	0	9	0	17	14%
Kisasa	21	10	4	16	6	57	48%
LRP	7	2	6	3	6	24	20%
Christian Cut	3	0	0	3	0	6	5%
No Data*	6	0	0	9	0	15	13%
Total	39	18	10	40	12	119	100

*These girls were believed to have gone through some kind of ceremony, however the team are unsure of the details.

This year, the teams faced significant difficulty in collecting this data. For the first time since the SAFE Maa campaign began, they found that the community were not willing to share the details of their daughter's graduation with them. It turned out the community feared that SAFE Maa were working in partnership with the government due to the large presence of the government officials at the Declaration Event. The 'No Data' column reflects those families who were not willing to share with the team. The team worked to resolve the breakdown of trust during the second part of the year.

The data shows the situation within Loita a year on from the Declaration of Abandonment. Upon reviewing the data, the team were initially disappointed that the event, and the follow up activities had not led to a significant uptake of the LRP throughout Loita. However, on further analysis of the data, it became clear that some areas of Loita – Morijo and Entersekera had zero cases of the traditional cut, and an encouraging increase to 40% or 50% respectively of girls passing through the LRP.

The border areas Olorte and Ilkerin were driving the rates of type two circumcision, partly due to the influence of the community's Loita neighbours in Tanzania and the non Loita Olderkesi, and their ability to cross the borders to access circumcisers who are willing to practice the traditional cut. Olmesutie is also a border zone, but as the hosts of the February 6th Declaration of Abandonment, many more of the community from this zone heard the messages of the event, which explains the lower rate of the traditional cut.

The team gathered the leaders together for a meeting at the beginning of February to discuss the results, and to discuss the other drivers of the traditional cut in the border communities:

- Traditionalists holding on to cutting as a key part of the culture. Many of the myths and customs that sustain the practice still exist. People continue to worry about the marriageability of girls if they are not cut and continue to believe that blood must be shed in order for her to be pure.
- Peer pressure is rife and is leading to girls asking to be cut. Uncut girls are stigmatised both in and outside of school by their peers. They are told that they are not women, warned that no one will help them during labour, and taunted that they will not find a husband within the community. This is creating fear and driving girls to force their parents to cut them, or to run away to be cut – usually across the border.

Another significant finding from the data was that although most Christians claim to have moved away from cutting, there are still those who cut in secret. This group fear both banishment from the church and social

ostracism from the wider Loita community. Therefore, they keep the cut a secret, only sharing with a few members of the family, and their daughter's future in laws.

4. What are the main challenges/obstacles you have faced during the reporting period? How have you responded to them?

The Team have experienced continued challenges in driving forward the adoption of the LRP and the total abandonment of FGC within Loita. The team met with S.A.F.E. HQ in January to strategize a way forward to address the challenges highlighted by the data collected in the first six months of the project:

- **Rebuilding trust:** The most important and worrying finding from the collection of the 'cutting season' data was the community's belief that the team were working with the Government. To address this challenge, the team created a new workshop session outlining who SAFE Maa are, what their objectives are, and how they planned to meet them. They stressed that they worked for the Loita people and not the government.
- **Creating joy and excitement around the LRP:** The data and the feedback from the community showed that people feel positively about the LRP, however, there is a hesitancy to embrace it due to the fear of being amongst the first families to practice the ceremony. In response to this, the team created a new performance piece, a play which followed one family as they made the decision to graduate their daughter through the LRP. Although COVID-19 restrictions have meant that this play has been little performed to the community, it is to be adapted into a screen version in November. It was not possible to film in Loita earlier as the community banned outsiders from entering Loita at the beginning of the pandemic, meaning a film crew would have been unable to gain permission to work there. With low infection rates countrywide this rule is being relaxed.

The team also enjoy the continued commitment of the Cultural Leaders and the TBAs to support their future activities. These two groups are vital in changing community opinion and their continued leadership is essential to SAFE Maa's project.

- **Continued engagement with the Loita Christians:** Loita's Christians are conflicted between their church, culture and their knowledge of the effects of FGC. Unable to publically practice either the LRP or any other form of girl's graduation, they are left having to practice their culture in private, through 'secret cutting'. SAFE Maa continued to engage these members of the community in order to facilitate sharing between community members and empower them to find a way to abandon cutting, without feeling alienated from their culture.
- **Increased engagement with the border communities:** These communities are experiencing a much slower progression towards the LRP than those in other parts of Loita. Key villages have been identified by the team as having the highest rates of the traditional cut, and the lowest rates of the LRP. During this period, the team focused their community workshops in these villages to support an acceleration of change within them.
- **Expansion into Olderkesi and Tanzania:** At the beginning of 2020, S.A.F.E. secured additional funds to support SAFE Maa's expansion into Olderkesi and Tanzania. The expansion into Olderkesi has started and the leadership are fully on board. However, the Tanzanian expansion has been delayed because the team are unable to travel there due to Kenyan Government COVID-19 restrictions.

The COVID-19 lockdowns and containment measures posed a significant challenge to the team's delivery with activities such as the performance tours having to be cancelled. However, the team were able to quickly

adapt and activities such as workshops and youth forums continued in a reduced format. As the number of cases of COVID-19 have reduced in Kenya, the team were also able to re-start the leadership meetings.

The longer term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are yet to be felt by the Loita Community. The closure of leisure facilities, the ban on international flights which caused the collapse of Kenya's tourism industry as well as many global events which have reduced Kenya's ability to trade, have caused an economic downturn resulting in over one million Kenyan's losing the jobs. The lack of household income puts girl's education in jeopardy, and puts girls at risk of FGC and early marriage.

S.A.F.E. have secured funding to increase the number of girls who are part of the SAFE Maa School Fees Support Programme. Next year, 14 girls will receive support either to start secondary school or to return to school if their parents are no longer able to afford the fees. The team will continue to monitor the situation, promoting the LRP and emphasising the importance of girl's education.

The continued demarcation of land is another significant challenge facing the Loita people and SAFE Maa. Demarcation is moving forward, but there is anxiety within the Loita leadership and community members alike that the process is being controlled by external parties, such as the local and national government. They also worry that the plans to protect the forest are being carried out with little consultation, and that valuable cultural sites might not be protected. The government have also proposed a new road which will go straight through the forest, it is unclear where the road will go and its purpose, leading many to believe it will be used to access Loita for mining or other resource extraction.

This complex and unclear situation is at the forefront of community consciousness and has the ability to eclipse SAFE Maa's work to promote the LRP. The cultural leaders are also often called away to land meetings, giving them less time to attend SAFE Maa's activities. SAFE Maa's Amos Leuka is part of the land committee responding to demarcation, enabling SAFE Maa to know the latest developments and organise leadership activities which do not clash with demarcation meetings. S.A.F.E. have secured a small start-up grant to progress SAFE Maa's environment work and are now developing a project which can help guide the community through the land changes and ensure forest and environmental protection is prioritised.

5. What are you planning to do in the next 12 months? Please provide a brief description, a work plan and state the amount of funds you are requesting from us. Please outline any substantive changes from the original proposal.

SAFE Maa will continue to address the feedback and challenges which have been thrown up in the wake of the Declaration of Abandonment; Promoting the LRP, building trust, supporting youth and accelerating change in the border regions.

With support from the J.A.C. Trust, the team will continue to closely engage the leadership through meetings in order achieve the project aims. The team will also continue their increased outreach engagement activities which have been essential to supporting girls through the long school closures.

SAFE Maa will also complete the adaptation of their programme in order for it to comply with the COVID-19 containment measures, this will involve filming the performance pieces. A series of short films will be created out of the performances, these will be screened in individual bomas with families who are within the

same household bubble in order to comply with the government regulations. They will also be distributed over WhatsApp, Facebook, radio and through partners in Loita and beyond. SAFE Samburu have already completed this adaptation within their programme and have had a very positive response from the community. Please see SAFE Samburu's FGC short film below:

FGC Piece

<https://vimeo.com/458149089>

password safe2020