

# J. A. Clark Charitable Trust

## Progress Report Guidelines

Registered Charity No. 1010520

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.

<b>Project Name</b>	FGC Abandonment in the Loita Hills
<b>Organisation Name</b>	S.A.F.E.
<b>Project Start Date</b>	1/09/2018
<b>Project End Date</b>	31/08/2022
<b>Reporting Period</b>	01/09/2020 – 31/08/2021

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.

Over the project period, the SAFE Maa team have worked to fill the gaps and address the challenges which were identified in the last project period. Issues such as secret cutting, resistance to change in the border regions and a lack of youth empowerment have been addressed in this period, and good progress has been made.

The team have continued to work within the government Covid-19 containment measures and stayed flexible and adaptive - implementing safer activities such as small youth forums, instead of riskier activities such as performance tours and large leader's meetings with the elder members of the community.

### **Beneficiaries Reached**

Youth Forums - 986

Community Workshops - 712

One on One interventions - 1831

Leaders Meetings - 109

Village Representatives Trained – 102

**Total: 3740**

### **Achievements**

**Rebuilt trust with the community:** Due to the impression that SAFE Maa were working with the government after the declaration event, in the previous cutting season (December 2019), the team had continued to observe a secrecy around cutting and were not able to have open conversations with community members about the rite of passage that their daughters passed through. However, through the trust building exercise carried out in the workshops, the provision of support during the hardships caused by Covid-19, and the expansion of the girl's scholarship programme - the team have successfully won back the trust of the community. This has meant over the project period, deeper and more honest conversations have been had in the activities, and a clearer picture of the FGC situation in December 2020 was gathered.

**Increased interaction and empowerment building of young people.** A key issue which had presented itself over the previous reporting period was a lack of self-confidence and a rise in peer pressure and stigma amongst the girls during the school closures. To combat this, the team implemented a series of youth forums and increased outreach work specifically designed to meet the needs of this group.

In these activities pre January (when the schools were still shut), the team worked with both the out of school youth and in school youth to discuss the challenges that they face due to the school closures and provide space for them to ask questions about the LRP. The youth reported that they supported FGC abandonment, and that the LRP was the right way forward for them, but continued to worry about community acceptance if they graduated to adulthood without FGC. SAFE Maa invited the TBAs and cultural leaders to these activities, and the youth were given the opportunity to share their fears to this influential group, and be reassured of their status if they passed through the LRP. In one session, the youth challenged the cultural leaders to lead the community with more than just words, and publicly graduate members of their own family through the LRP. The youth said it was actions such as these which would give them the confidence to embrace it. These were powerful sessions which helped SAFE Maa to understand where the stigma came from, and helped young people to work through their reservations about FGC abandonment.

These activities continued after the opening of schools in January and specifically targeted the out of school youth who are the group most at risk of FGC. The team focused their work on the border areas where cases of 'traditional FGC' were seen over the December cutting season. The out of school youth reported feeling powerless compared to their educated peers, but their confidence greatly improved over the course of the activities. The morans were paramount to the success of these activities, they were able to engage with the out of school youth and share their belief in the power of the LRP. This had a significant effect on the participants, who were surprised and encouraged that their peers had such conviction about the abandonment of FGC. Although peer pressure and stigma existed throughout the period, the team saw a marked improvement within the activities.

**Engagement and training of young circumcisers.** Over the project period, news reached the SAFE Maa team that there was a new generation of circumcisers who had started to practice in Loita. The traditional circumcisers had stopped practicing after their engagements with SAFE Maa, leaving a gap in the market which was filled by young women. Economic hardship had forced them into occupations they would have not previously considered.

SAFE Maa worked with their representatives in the villages to identify these women, and invited them to a series of workshops delivered in partnership with the TBAs who had abandoned cutting. In the initial workshops, the women did not want to admit their new role. However, as the team built trust with them, they admitted to practicing FGC. The women said that they only practiced Kisasa, and were not aware that it was harmful to girls. However, as they were educated on the effects of FGC, and given the details of the LRP and their possible role within it, they made pledges to support SAFE Maa's abandonment work. One participant gave a powerful testimony - saying that she had been caught practicing FGC and had been arrested. She said the consequences for girls and for the circumcisers themselves outweighed any small income gained through cutting, and advised everyone to find other ways of making money.

**Deeper expansion into Oldekesi.** At the request of the leadership in Olderkesi and to combat the prevalence of 'traditional' FGC in the border regions, the SAFE Maa team have expanded their operations into Oldekesi - a Maasai community bordering Loita to the west. At the beginning of the reporting period, SAFE Maa had secured the support of the leadership from Olderkesi and were ready to deepen their intervention. Over the past year, the team have spent time building a relationship of trust and mutual respect with the Olderkesi community through workshops, youth forums and outreach work. SAFE Maa now have two full time outreach officers in Oldekesi, and an active network of thirty-two women in the villages to support activities and outreach work. The team has a solid foundation with which to continue their intervention.

**Leadership taking ownership of the FGC abandonment campaign:** In September 2020, a meeting was convened at the Assistant County Commissioners Office with the cultural leaders and SAFE Maa in attendance. The topics covered at this meeting included FGC and early pregnancy as these were a cause of anxiety amongst the leadership due to the school closures. The fact that this meeting was called for by the leadership themselves, with SAFE Maa as attendees, shows that the leadership have ownership of the project and that they now consider the safety of girls to be of enough importance to warrant a meeting between stakeholders.

**Impact**

As a result of their continued work, for the first year since the police crackdown on FGC in 2018, and the Declaration of abandonment in 2019, the SAFE Maa team have seen a significant shift away from ‘traditional’ cutting. Data collected in January 2021 showed that only 5% of girls who had graduated in December underwent the traditional cut, this had reduced from 12% the year before. The vast majority of the community continue to practice kisasa (69% as per the December data), and 26% of those who graduated in December went through the LRP. Although the team are very encouraged by the move away from traditional cutting, there is more work to be done to build confidence in the LRP, and frustration at the continued popularity of Kisasa. It is worth noting that as per last year, the team saw a reduction in the number of girls graduating, showing the community is waiting for a clearer path towards the LRP.

The SAFE Maa team also reported that they have seen more people in the villages publicly going through the LRP. SAFE Maa Senior Outreach Officer Naserian Simpano graduated her daughter through the LRP and was personally congratulated by the local chief. These brave role models are giving confidence to other families who practice the LRP in secret, to celebrate their decision in public.

In addition, the local chiefs reported that when the schools re-opened in January 2021, the vast majority of girls returned. This was hugely encouraging because it shows efforts by the SAFE Maa team and the community to protect girls from FGC and early marriage during the closures had been successful. Through interacting with the teachers and parents, the SAFE Maa team also ascertained that although there was an increase in unplanned pregnancies – young mothers were being helped back to school. Educated girls have much higher levels of agency and are often allowed to make their own decisions about FGC, therefore, this prioritising of girl’s education is a hugely important step towards total abandonment.

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?)
Olderkesi focus Group Training	September	Completed as planned
Leaders Meeting x 2	September	Completed as planned
Youth Forums x 7	September	Completed as planned
Outreach work	September	Completed as planned
Community Workshops x 6	October	Completed as planned
Youth forums x 3	October	Completed as planned
Outreach work	October	Completed as planned
Filming of SAFE Maa Performances	November	Postponed due to government lockdown
Youth Forums x 8	December	Completed in November to replace the filming activity
Community workshops x 4	December	Completed in November to replace the filming activity
Outreach work	November	Completed as planned

Focus Group Discussions	June	New M&E activity completed in December
Outreach work	December	Completed as planned
Cutting season evaluation	January	Completed as planned
Screening tour	February	Postponed due to government lockdown
Community Workshops x 1	February	Completed as planned – Updated to include the new circumcisers
Youth forums x 8	N/A	Replacement for the cancelled screening tour – completed in February
Outreach work	February	Completed as planned
Leaders meetings	March	Reduced sized meeting completed as planned
Community workshops x 6	March/ April	Completed as planned
Outreach work	March	Completed as planned
Youth forums x 12	April	Completed as planned with additional activities
Outreach work	April	Completed as planned
Community workshops x 4	May	Completed as planned
Screening tour x 1	May	Postponed due to government lockdown
Youth forums x 3	May	Replacement for the cancelled screening tour
Training of a young womens Focus Group	May	Replacement for the cancelled screening tour
Outreach work	May	Completed as planned
Community workshops x 9	June	Completed as planned
Training of young women’s focus group	N/A	New Activity - Completed in June
Youth forums x 8	N/A	Activities additional to the w/p completed in June
Outreach work	June	Completed as planned
Community workshops x 9	N/A	Activities additional to the w/p completed in July
Youth Forums x 8	N/A	Activities additional to the w/ completed in July
Outreach work	July	Completed as planned
Training of young women’s focus group	N/A	New activity - Completed in July
Leaders meetings x 6	July/ March	Completed in August
Screening tour x 1	August	Postponed due to government lockdown
Youth Forums x 8	August	Completed as planned
Outreach work	August	Completed as planned

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

The SAFE Maa team use a mixed methods approach to monitoring the progress of the project:

- **Narrative reports of the activities:** This is the key method of monitoring the impact of the project and gaining feedback from the community. During each workshop, forum or meeting, the team note down the questions, statements and conversations that happen between the participants. These are written up at the end of the workshop, collated with other activity reports and distributed to the team and the senior leadership team.
- **Feedback from key community stakeholders:** This feedback is collected in the leadership meetings and through one on one discussions with key community stakeholders. The team ask them for their

feedback on the progression of the LRP and any obstacles of developments in the community that the SAFE Maa team should be aware of.

- **Focus Group Discussions:** This is a new activity which started in December 2020. They are dedicated discussions for the purposes of M&E. Each section of the community (men, women, morans, youth) are engaged separately and are asked a series of questions to ascertain their attitudes and behaviours towards the LRP, FGC abandonment, girl's education, and women in decision making positions. Attached is a breakdown of the results of these discussions.
- **Data collected during the December 'Cutting Season':** Every January, the Maa team move around the community, talking to community members to ascertain how many girls had graduated in that period and what type of graduation ceremony they underwent. Please see below the breakdown of the cutting season data collected in January 2021.

December Cutting Season 2020	Traditional	Kisasa	LRP
Olmesutie	0	7	1
Morijio	0	3	3
Ilkerin	1	6	2
Olorte	1	8	3
Entersekera	0	5	2
Total	2	29	11
Percentage share	5%	69%	26%

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

#### COVID-19

COVID-19 continues to present a significant challenge both to the Loita Community, and to SAFE Maa's project. Due to the government containment measures, and then a suspected outbreak of COVID-19 in Loita, the team have continued to be unable to either carry out their performance tours or film and screen them. Activities with the older members of the community have been challenging, and the team have had to significantly reduce the number of participants in a workshop. This has meant carrying out more activities to maintain their reach. The team has also kept the new session on Covid-19 in the curriculum to support Loita's response to the pandemic.

Although this disruption has presented a challenge to the team, they have created an opportunity out of the space created in the schedule by cancelled activities. More youth forums and community workshops in the border regions have been implemented. In addition, the provision of the information about Covid-19 has been a key aspect of the rebuilt trust between the team and the community.

#### Hesitancy of the community to move away from Kisasa

Although the December data, and the data collected through the FGDs showed significant improvement in terms of the move away from traditional cutting, kisasa is still by far the most popular choice for families. It has also been reported anecdotally to the team that within the two categories of 'kisasa' and 'LRP' – what actually happens during the graduation, and how it is celebrated differs between families.

Of the community members who are practicing kisasa, the majority of them are doing so in private, it is very rare to see a family cutting their daughters in public. This is in line with previous years, however, the reasons for the community practicing FGC in secret are starting to change. The law and threat of arrest

remains, but the social acceptability of FGC has also decreased making people not want to practice in public for fear of the reactions of their neighbours. Despite this attitudinal change, FGC is still taking place.

There are also those who do not feel able to reveal that they have graduated through the LRP. They are doing it at home without the public celebrations. There is then a third group, those who are publicly practicing the LRP and make it known that this is what they are doing, however, after the ceremony the girl is then given a small symbolic cut to ensure that blood is still shed, although this part of the ceremony remains secret\*.

\*this was still classified as 'kisasa' during the data collection in January.

Focus Group Discussions which took place in December showed that the majority of the community support FGC abandonment (67%) and 73% agreed that the LRP was the correct way forward. In addition, the leadership and community members have anecdotally been positive about the LRP, saying they want to adopt it, but want others to lead the way. Therefore, the SAFE Maa team remain strong in their conviction that the LRP is the only solution to the sustainable abandonment of FGC in Loita.

To unify the community and continue to promote confidence in the LRP, the team will continue their interventions to build confidence in the LRP in partnership with the TBAs and cultural leaders. SAFE Maa will also encourage influential community members to lead by example, and publicly graduate their daughters through the LRP.

The team also believe that the new film resource will greatly assist them with this objective by renewing the community's interest in the topic. SAFE Maa's sister team, SAFE Samburu, have found that when the performance tours were presented in a new, exciting and innovative format, the audiences approached the post screening dialogue sessions with new energy and openness.

### **Emergence of new FGC trends - younger girls and older women undergoing FGC**

In the workshops, some have said that girls who are not in school have been cut younger than before, because their parents are concerned that if they wait, the girl will have more agency and be able to report them to the local chief of the police. Others are saying that women are being married without undergoing the cut and are then choosing to be cut later in life, after they have had children, because as their children grow they suffer stigma for having an uncut mother. There are also reports that young educated women who are not married being teased and told that the reason they are not yet married is because they have not undergone FGC. Three women from Olorte chose to be cut because of such pressure.

To respond to these issues, SAFE Maa is deepening the work with young women to provide support, empowerment and reassurance to those who want to take the brave step forward towards the LRP. To this end, a new team of young women are being identified and recruited as part time outreach officers. This group will work closely with the moran's to provide peer support and mentorship to young women and girls through youth forums, outreach work and sessions within schools.

### **Land Demarcation**

Land demarcation continues to be an extremely challenging and complex issue facing the Loita Community. The process is moving forwards, but there is a great deal of anxiety amongst the team and in the wider community that decisions are being made by external parties that do not have their best interests at heart. For example, there was a plan put forward by the relevant government agencies in partnership with WWF that the Loita Forest should be put under shared ownership with neighbouring communities. The community feared that without the cultural attachment and ecological understanding

of the forest, people from neighbouring communities will cut down the trees, and the forest will disappear. There continues to be a lack of transparency and uncertainty about the process.

SAFE Maa's Project Manager Amos Leuka is on the land committee and, with the team's support has been a key part of Loita's response to the demarcation process.

Land demarcation is also a challenge for the SAFE Maa team because the Loita leadership have been tied up in meetings, making it challenging to organise meetings about FGC with this important group. This, combined with the age and vulnerability of this group has led the team to come up with new ways to conduct leadership meetings. Instead of meeting the leadership all together, they conducted six separate meetings in the different locations. The aim is to bring the group together, if possible, towards the end of the year and ahead of the next December 'cutting season'.

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.

**Engagement and training of a young women's outreach team.** This is one of the most exciting new initiatives, which will bring together twelve empowered and engaged young women, and employ them, initially as part time staff, in order that they can start to reach out to their age mates in the same way that the morans have reached out to their peers.

This group will focus on interactions with the youth. Leading activities such as the youth forums, and re-starting SAFE Maa's school programme – now that the schools covid-19 restrictions have started to ease.

**Continuation of the promotion of the LRP in partnership with the young women, morans, cultural leaders and TBAs.** Over the next 12 months, the SAFE Maa team will continue to promote the LRP in partnership with the cultural leaders, TBAs, the morans and the new outreach team. This alternative ceremony will remain at the heart of SAFE Maa's FGC abandonment project.

**Continuation of the expansion into Olderkesi and Tanzania.** The team have made their entry into Olderkesi and in the month of September 2021, carried out the first training of village representatives from the Tanzanian side of Loita. These expansions are supporting SAFE Maa's work in the border regions of Loita where traditional FGC is still practiced with the aim of completely eliminating 'traditional' FGC. This expansion is also part of a wider objective to share SAFE Maa's methodology which other practicing communities in Kenya and further afield.

**Filming of SAFE Maa's performance and resumption of tours.** SAFE Maa have had to postpone the filming three times over the last twelve months due to the uncertainty caused by Covid-19. All of the necessary preparation has been done, and the team aim to have this completed within the next 12 month period. Once the performances have been filmed. It will be possible for SAFE Maa to conduct screening tours.

**Environmental work in partnership with the morans and young womens outreach team.** SAFE Maa are embarking on a pilot environment project which will be led by the Maa team in the community and the young women's outreach team in schools. Through this programme, the team will prepare participants for individual land ownership by promoting re-forestation in individual homesteads and the protection of water catchment, and areas of cultural and ecological importance within the community. The team also aim to spread awareness of the importance of elephant conservation, tackling the issue of human wildlife conflict through screenings of the film the Elephant Queen (dubbed into Ki-maasai) in both the community and within schools.



6. 1 page beneficiary case study and photo

Category: Circumcicer/TBA.

Name: Moipoi Kosiom.

Age: 45 years

Marital status: Married

My name is Moipoi and I am a TBA from the Loita Community. I have been working with SAFE Maa for a long time and I think they are a good organization because they stop people from doing harmful things without forcing them. They have opened my eyes, and the eyes of the community to the fact that you can abandon bad practices without losing the culture.

I have never been to school and had grown up with girls being cut, at that time, we were all cut. I thought that it was a must that girls undergo FGC. I never believed that a time would come when a practice that was a cause of such a big celebration could be stopped. It wasn't immediate, but after time I stopped cutting completely. I came to understand that it was dangerous and could be very harmful in the long run. Now, I hold meetings in the villages to talk about FGC with men and women and I was part of the group who developed the Loita Rite of Passage. People know that I work with SAFE Maa, and that I no longer cut.

Cutting has gone down since SAFE Maa started their work and things are changing in the community. The LRP is slowly being adopted, but cutting still happens in some places. It is a process but I believe that eventually it will stop completely.