

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.

Project Name	Ending FGM/C in the Loita Hills, Kenya
Organisation Name	SPONSORED ARTS FOR EDUCATION (SAFE)
Project Start Date	August 1 st 2017
Project End Date	July 31 st 2018

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

SAFE Maa seek to end FGM/C in the Loita Hills. When the team started 8 years ago 99% of girls were being cut, this number has decreased steadily. At the beginning of this grant, 30% of girls were going through the ARP and of those who were still being cut, 90% had moved onto to a smaller, less dangerous cut locally known as 'kisasa'. The aim for this year of funding was to continue with education and move those families who are still practicing the traditional cut and 'kisasa' to the ARP.

SAFE Maa's work on FGM/C is part of a larger plan to elevate and empower women within the community. The Loita Maasai is still a deeply patriarchal society - the power lies with the men and most of the leadership positions are held by men. There are signs of progress as girl's education improves, and there are more women in employment and in leadership positions. For example, the first ever female chief was recently appointed in the Morijo location. Alongside the FGM/C work, SAFE Maa promotes women through equal employment opportunities and encouraging and supporting girls to finish their schooling.

This year, the project objectives broadened as the team prepared to engage the Loita leadership for a declaration of abandonment. Therefore, the focus for the second half of the grant was to engage the leadership on the ARP and enlist their support for a declaration of abandonment in February 2019.

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. For sustainable change to be achieved, there needs to be a community wide decision to abandon the practice. Therefore, education is targeted at everyone so that they can be a part of the change, making it more sustainable.

Activities:

Women's Workshops x 7 - 154 participants

Men's Workshops x 4 - 96 participants

Moran Workshops x 1 - 31 participants

School health clubs x 4 - 200 participants

Youth forum x 1 – 127 participants

Performance tours x 3 - 17,692 participants

Support of the focus group x 12 members

During this year, the team were forced to have a change of strategy which involved reaching out to the Loita Leadership. This change was brought about by a sudden increase in secrecy surrounding family's decisions during the December 'cutting' season. In January, the team met to discuss the results of the most recent season, and these were the same as the year before – approximately 30% of girls were passing through the ARP, 60% Kisasa (similar to type 1) and 10% the type 2 traditional cut. Additionally, news had reached the team through a focus group that three women, who had been married uncut, had been forced by their in-laws to be cut in order to become eligible to serve their husbands meat during an important ceremony.

Most significant to this change was the families reluctance to share which form of graduation their daughter would undergo, which had never previously happened. This was due to a crackdown by the Government, with an attempt by the authorities to enforce the law banning the practice. The danger was that the cut would now be driven underground. The team decided that it was time the cultural leadership stepped up and took on a more active role in the campaign to end FGM/C. The leaders had been supporting the SAFE Maa team in private, but with the Alternate Rite of Passage offering a far greater protection of the culture than a secret cut in the night, the Maa team felt time was right for them to request the cultural leadership (Loita's most important leaders) to step forward and publically declare their support for abandonment.

To this aim, the following leader's meetings were held in the second half of the grant:

Women leaders meeting x 2 – 25 participants (participants were the same in both meetings)

Cultural leaders meeting x 2 – 47 participants (the first meeting consisted of 20 cultural leaders, these leaders then invited 27 of their colleagues to join them, as they felt the message was so important, all leaders across Kenya and Tanzania should be included).

Young leaders meetings x 1 – 10 participants

Total Participants: 18,394

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

LEADERS MEETINGS

These critical gatherings consisted of five meetings, two with the cultural leaders, two with the women leaders and one with the young leaders. They were called to propose a community wide declaration of abandonment.

During these meetings, the leaders debated how to forge a way forward, wanting to protect the culture and women at the same time. They were keen to discuss how they as a group could be part of driving this change and an agreement was reached for a declaration of abandonment on February 6th 2019.

Unexpectedly, as this was the first time the 47 cultural leaders had been together for over twenty years, they decided to take the opportunity to bless the Alternate Rite of Passage. This means that any woman who has undergone the ARP can no longer be excluded from any part of Maasai culture or ceremony.

PERFORMANCES

Performances focused on keeping SAFE Maa's messaging at the fore front of people's minds. The team travelled around the Loita region, performing at markets for audiences of over 500 people as well as visiting individual homesteads to perform to families.

The team have been accompanied by the SAFE Moran team on these tours. The morans draw in large crowds as it is not common to see groups of morans singing and dancing in public, and unheard-of to see morans singing that they want to marry uncut girls. The audiences were interested to hear this declaration and wanted to hear more about it.

The performance tours were a critical vehicle for the team to give out the message of the declaration to the community. Both spreading the message that the cultural leaders had blessed the ARP and of the declaration of abandonment on the 6th February. The performance tours have always been at the heart of SAFE Maa's programme and they have continued to be a powerful tool to provide mass education.

WORKSHOPS

The workshops continued to be carried out with the key groups in Loita; Women, men and morans. The workshops are set over two days, covering topics such as the origins of FGM/C, effects of FGM/C, the ARP and a way forward. The workshops encourage participants to think about why the community practice FGM/C and consider its importance to the culture. In the way forward, the participants discuss ways to protect the culture at the same time as protecting women and girls from harm.

SCHOOL HEALTH CLUBS

The school health clubs help the team engage with the leaders of tomorrow in Loita. In the school health club meetings, the team talk about all of the challenges that are facing the youth. This is STD's, FGM/C, alcohol, drugs and hygiene. The school youth talk about ways to overcome these problems and how they can share the information they know with their families and the rest of the community.

To promote equality, the clubs are made up of equal parts of girls and boys. The team have also introduced tag rugby, to promote team building between the boys and the girls.

YOUTH FORUMS

The youth forum is a continuation of the school health clubs, but they are aimed at all young people in Loita, both those in and out of school. At this forum young people have a chance to meet their peers from all over Loita and talk about the issues discussed in the school clubs. This year they spoke about the barriers to pupils, both girls and boys finishing their education. They decided that although poverty played a role, most of their peers were dropping out of school due to alcohol, drugs and early pregnancy. The group also spoke about FGM/C, discussing why it was still practiced and how to support SAFE Maa's work in bringing it to an end.

FOCUS GROUP/SUB LOCATION REPRESENTATIVES

In each of the areas of Loita, SAFE Maa have representatives who act as their eyes and ears on the ground. They help SAFE Maa mobilise for workshops, recommending those who are resistant to change and inviting them to SAFE's activities. The focus group also refer girls and their families to the SAFE Maa team if they are looking for guidance on the type of passage their daughter should pass through.

ONE ON ONE INTERVENTIONS

Each of the outreach officers carry out one on one interventions in their zone. Often families will approach the officers and invite them to come to their homes and talk through the effects of FGM/C, taking this information into account when deciding about the rite of passage girls should pass through.

The team also work with the focus group to identify families who have daughters at the age when they will be graduating to adulthood. In these cases, they will be approached by the outreach team and a focus group member, to give them information – informing their choice.

The one on one interventions also extend to students in the school clubs and other girls who need help and assistance. Often, the team are approached and asked for their assistance by girls who are resisting being cut. In these circumstances, they will try and mediate with the girl's family, often in partnership with her teachers.

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.*

In the first half of the grant, the team continued to engage people through the workshops. It had seemed as though the community were at a 'tipping point' of converting to the ARP. At this crucial time for the community, it was important for them to have a safe space where they can discuss the myths and misconceptions around FGM/C and decide for themselves that it needs to end.

During the women's workshops, the team continued to make progress, in particular with the older women. Often, it is the elder women who pose the most significant opposition to change, saying that they cannot abandon the culture, and nothing could ever replace the cut. However, in the final session of the women's workshops – where the team discuss the ARP, most of the participants were satisfied that the chain, blue shuka and water could prepare a girl for marriage and that the pouring of milk on a girl's genitals could cleanse a girl, making the cut unnecessary. Following the cultural leaders blessing of the ARP, the team now have a powerful tool to use during conversations with women in workshops who want to understand how the ARP can replace FGM/C.

In the men's workshops, there was a similar rate of progress. The men had long discussions about how FGM/C affected them, namely, the loss of sexual satisfaction for women which also has a negative impact on sexual experiences for men. They said that it is not easy to be satisfied by a cut woman, and in return she does not seem to enjoy it. They said uncut women have larger levels of desire and are willing to initiate sex. At the end of the workshops, the men were fully engaged in promoting the ARP and wanted others in the community to receive the same information, so they could come together and make a community wide decision.

This progress was a continuation of the success that had been made in the years before this grant and the team were satisfied that the debates in the workshops were in line with expectations. However, the data collected in the 'cutting' season did not reflect this progress when it came to the number of girls passing through the ARP.

The results from the data collected by the teams was there was traditional cut: 3%, kisasa: 61% and ARP 30%. The results were similar to both last years and the findings from the external evaluation carried out last May with support from the JAC Trust (ARP 33%, Kisasa 51% and traditional 16%). Here, there seems to be a continuation in the movement from traditional to Kisasa, but the move to the ARP has remained the at a similar rate.

Leadership meetings

When the team approached the leadership meetings, they hoped to engage them for a declaration of abandonment. In embarking on these meetings, the team were expecting some resistance from the cultural leaders to openly declare the end of FGM/C. However, the leaders pledged their full support to the team, saying that the matter was of the upmost importance and needed to be addressed.

In the women leaders workshops, they talked of their frustrations about a lack of female representation in the Loita leadership. They believed that women were good at making decisions that are beneficial for the entire community, they saw the decision to end FGM/C as something good for the community and wanted to be a part of this change. They agreed the ARP was the best way to keep the culture, and protect women from harm. They all wanted to become role models for change within their communities and now believed their voice would be heard.

A key figure of the women leaders meeting was the only female chief in region, Sylvia Naisuaku. She offered her support to any woman who wanted to address their community. The women were thankful to SAFE Maa for involving them in this important project, grateful to have an opportunity to be part of a big event in Loita's history.

At the initial cultural leaders meeting, the attendees said that this issue was an important one and merited a longer discussion, they also recommended that their colleagues from Tanzania attend the next meeting, so they could be a part of the community decision. This second meeting was the first time the cultural leaders have met since 1992, showing the commitment of the cultural leaders to ending FGM/C within the Loita Maasai.

There is concern amongst the cultural leadership that ever increasing physical and digital connectivity is eroding their culture. A new threat to their culture is the government crack down on FGM/C, meaning families will have to cut their girls in secret, without ceremony if they wish to continue cutting. The cultural leaders recognised the ARP as a way to preserve this important cultural rite and to protect girls and women from harm at the same time.

Their commitment was further proved, when the cultural leaders took the opportunity to officially bless the ARP. This blessing is now being used by the team as a powerful argument against cutting girls. This result was unexpected but the very welcomed by the team. The cultural leaders will be fully involved in the plans for the Declaration of Abandonment as they develop over the coming months.

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

Involving the community/ cultural leaders has given weight to SAFE Maa's message. In the most recent tours, the community had fed back that they now understand the importance of what SAFE Maa have been talking about all these years, now the leadership are with them, they must pay attention.

The cultural leaders have also given the team advice on their strategy to ensure that everyone is involved and engaged in the declaration. They recommended the implementation of a steering committee – this steering committee is helping the team navigate the preparations for the declaration of abandonment, ensuring that the entire community are involved in the preparations and the day. As well as giving the team guidance, the steering committee give the community ownership of the declaration.

The inclusion of the influential women within Loita as well as the cultural leaders in leader's meetings has also been met with great approval and enthusiasm from the community. The women feel as though they are largely left out of important decisions effecting their community, therefore when SAFE Maa included the influential women in preparations for the declaration event, the group were grateful and pledged their full support. Their support is vital for the success of the declaration event, as the women's workshops had showed that some of the biggest opposition to the ARP came from the elder women, who need to be engaged to increase the impact of the declaration event.

The performance tours, which have been a core part of the SAFE Maa's programme, have been an important way of giving out information on a mass scale. The audience were surprised to hear the news about the declaration, but also excited to understand more about what it meant for them and about what would happen on the day.

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

The main challenge that the team faced this year was crack down on FGM/C from the government, causing the community to fear talking about the type of cut they practice openly. SAFE Maa's entire programme is based on an open and non-judgemental dialogue around FGM/C, and with the community suddenly fearful of arrest if they admitted to cutting their daughters, the success of the programme was put in jeopardy. To solve this challenge, the team came up with the new strategy of involving the community leadership and planning a declaration of abandonment.

Another area where the team has faced challenges is with the school's programme. The teachers at the school are asking for SAFE Maa to contribute more than just education, they want the team to fund girls from the school health clubs through secondary school or give the school seedlings and help the students to plant trees in the school grounds. To combat this issue, S.A.F.E. are looking for individual donors to fund girls through secondary school. By offering this sponsorship, it is hoped to increase the participation of schools with SAFE Maa's programme.

Earlier this year, Kenya experienced unprecedented rainfall, this rainfall halted a lot of SAFE Maa's activities due to the impassable roads. Therefore, the team carried out back to back tours later in the year to make up for lost time during the rains.

7. What did you learn?

This year has been a valuable learning process for SAFE Maa. The slowing down of progress and the threat of the cut going underground has highlighted the sensitivity of the programme, and how essential a continuous and flexible campaign is. It has also highlighted the importance of the outreach work and the focus groups, as it is through these initiatives that the team can keep abreast of the latest developments within the community and then react to them.

The change of direction in programming has meant that the team are carrying out new activities and are engaging with a group in Loita that they have not previously been working with. Through this they have learnt how to engage and mobilise important people in the Loita, they have also learnt how to get access to important leaders, both locally and nationally.

The steering committee have been part of guiding this learning, giving the team advice on who needs to be consulted and included in the planning progress. Now the team have included all the cultural and government chiefs in the preparations for the declaration.

In March this year, the team attended a knowledge sharing workshop in partnership with the Orchid Project. In this workshop, the team learnt about the six elements of FGM/C abandonment as created by UNICEF. These include a non-judgemental, human rights approach which the team have made great use of during the discussions with the leadership. They began the sessions by simply talking about the effects of FGM/C, describing how it is an abuse of the girl's human rights and letting the group come up with their own way forward. In the meetings, the participants understood that FGM/C was an abuse of a girl's human rights. They discussed how the girls are being further abused by being cut in secret as they are now being denied their celebration.

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

Loita is a deeply patriarchal society, with most of the leadership positions being taken up by men, however this does seem to be changing with the election of the first female chief Sylvia in the Morijo location. SAFE Maa support the promotion of women in leadership positions, firstly by sponsoring girls through education and also by employing, training and empowering their own female members of staff.

SAFE Maa lead by example – the team is an equal split of men and women and the leadership is divided between the two project managers, one male and one female. This is a clear message to the community

that female leadership is valued. Having strong female representation in a high-profile organisation such as SAFE Maa, shows the value of girls education, as parents see that an educated daughter can bring an income into the family through working, not just through marriage.

This year, SAFE Maa have promoted the female leaders within Loita, by including them both in the leadership meetings and in the steering committee. As well as a desire to promote the place of women within the community, the team were determined to have female representation in the planning of an event concerning an issue that mainly effects women.

The end of FGM/C will create new opportunities for women all over Loita. FGM/C is carried out on girls in their young teens and once she is cut, she is considered a woman and ready for marriage. By stopping FGM/C, girls will be able to stay in school longer and avoid early marriage.

The SAFE programme is holistic. The team do not only talk about FGM/C but help girls with other challenges that they face during the schools programme. Many of the school teachers have reported that SAFE Maa's school clubs give girls motivation to stay in school as they learn important life skills such as avoiding drugs and early pregnancy and fully understand how important education is for their future as well as for their families and community.