



MERU WOMEN'S
GARDEN PROJECT

A partnership between
Soroptimist International
Great Britain & Ireland
CHILD
.ORG
Charity No: 1118528

TOTAL FUNDS RAISED BY SIGBI TO MARCH 31, 2019: £144,737

FUNDS RAISED BY SISEE TO MARCH 31, 2019: £24,214.48

These are amazing amounts making it highly likely we'll reach our three year target of £150,000.

A HUGE WELL DONE TO ALL AT SISEE. All UK regions have raised great amounts but we've raised more than any other with Cheshire, North Wales and Wirral raising £12,66.28 (the closest to our region's total).

The project launched in 2016.

From July 2016 –March 2017 preparatory work was being undertaken by Child.org and CIFORD. This included:

- Scoping out communities to decide which would benefit from the training
- Regional selection - Child.org and our partners meet with local government and chiefs in the chosen communities who are invited to take part.
- A shortlist is created of selected communities. They are informed about the project at a public meeting. They can ask questions and find out benefits.
- Child.org's partners, CIFORD, identify women's groups in the chosen communities.
- Regular training sessions* are held for 3 months to make sure the women involved are committed to the project.
- Those not engaged in the training but just the potential for donations are filtered out through this process, leaving only interested groups of women who wish to gain new skills and are willing to commit to the whole course.

*Training includes: Group dynamics, leadership skills, record keeping, developing a constitution and light agricultural training.

Summary of Year 1 (March 2017-February 2018)

A total of £49,521 was spent in Year 1 which covers agreed upon activities in 2016. This paid for:

- Women's groups - 160 women to be trained on sustainable agri-cultural techniques and be a part of a supportive community group.
- Alternative Rites of Passage - 203 girls to be educated on the harmful traditional practice of female circumcision and offer an alternative tradition.
- Boys' Forums - 76 boys trained to empower them to support girls within their community, improve relationships and educate them on substance abuse.



What we achieved:

Women's Agricultural Groups: 5 groups with 160 women.

Alternative Rites of Passage Workshops: 2 workshops reaching 203 girls.

Boys Forums: 1 boys' forum reaching 6 boys and a day-long's workshop that reached 70 boys

Total: 439

Summary of Year 2 (March 2018–February 2019)

In the second project year, we have exceeded the original targets of community members we estimated to work with. Scoping activities went really well in Lairangi community. This area is slightly further away from the CIFORD centre (25km) than the previous groups so it was a new area for introducing the activities.



There was great demand in the area with 253 women from 9 women's groups wanting to engage with the programme. Community Mobilisation sessions were held

with community members and leaders to introduce the project and get their approval. These sessions included women and men's forums to educate them on the agricultural training programme, but also the ARP sessions and the boys' forum and encouraging them to allow their children to attend.

- Within the first three months of the Year 2, two motorbikes were purchased for use by the CIFORD team to aid with project logistics, especially as the new community was further away than the other groups. Public transport is hard to come by in the areas of these new groups so CIFORD was unable to rely on buses. SIGBI agreed funds for motorbikes ensuring that the team are more efficient with travel and their project time.
- The **Agricultural Training** started in August 2018, after three months of scoping activities. The 9 groups were assessed for their attendance and commitment to the programme and started the curriculum learning about group dynamics, setting up table-banking and merry-go-round systems (if they didn't have them already) and developing some basic agricultural skills.
- Tools and seeds were distributed in November after 4 months of training. Training continues with all 9 groups in their communities along with monthly in-depth training for select women from each group to go back and teach their fellow group members what they have learnt, at the CIFORD centre.
- Year 2 also saw the first **Mother's Nutritional Training** group sessions with 83 young mothers, more than the originally estimated 60, due to high demand for sessions. These young mothers travel long distances to get to these sessions which indicates the demand and need for more support groups such as these. Topics covered so far in the sessions include family planning, child nutrition, food preparation and handling, water, sanitation and hygiene, and basic first aid for children.
- Two **ARP Sessions** were held in this project period with a total of 149 girls across the two sessions. The girls were guided through a ceremony without being circumcised. They were also educated on issues affecting girls within the community and the week was completed with a graduation ceremony which was attended by parents.

- December also saw a successful **Boy's Forum**. 60 boys were invited with 48 attending (a big improvement on Year 1 of programme activities). There is a general attitude that seminars held by CIFORD are for women and girls. CIFORD ensured that the seminar was held at a different location to the CIFORD centre to differentiate between the girls and the boys' seminars. The boys were taken through a curriculum of topics which addressed issues that they face within society and also the importance of respecting others in their community.



Goals for Year 2 (March 2018-February 2019):

- Women's Agricultural Groups: 4 groups with 120 women
- Alternative Rites of Passage Workshops: 2 workshops with 120 girls
- Boy's Forums: 1 forum for 60 boys
- Mothers Nutritional Training Groups: 6 groups with 120 women

Total: 420 women, girls and boys

What we achieved:

A total of £52,250.50 was spent in Year 2. This paid for:

- Women's Agricultural Groups: 9 groups with 253 members
- Alternative Rites of Passage Workshops: 2 workshops with 149 girls
- Boys Forum: 1 forum with 48 boys
- Mothers Nutritional Training Group: 5 Groups with 83 members *

Total: 533 women, girls and boys.

*This figure for the Mother's Nutritional Training only reflects the first intake of women (July-Dec 2018). There was another intake due in January but this has been delayed to late February this year with the group finishing in July instead of June. We are expecting to exceed target.

Year 3 summary (2019-2020)

- A third intake of women's groups will be recruited for agricultural training in year 3 and will be trained in sustainable agriculture.
- There will be 2 ARP workshops and 1 planned boys' forum, with the potential for a second - dependent upon the success of year 2.
- Those women's groups that were trained in Year 2 will be monitored and mentored throughout year 3 of the project to ensure they are continuing with best practice and making progress.
- The mothers' nutritional training will continue with two more 6 month cycles, engaging a planned total of 240 young mothers.
- Agricultural training: 6 groups with 180 women
- Alternative Rites of Passage: 2 workshops with 120 girls
- Boys' forums: 1 or 2 forums with 60 boys
- Mothers' nutritional training: 12 groups with 240 mothers
- Total target: 600 women ,girls and boys

Spending for Year 3 is yet to be confirmed, but will be as soon as we know the total amount raised. We plan for it to be a similar amount as the first two years based on the similar targets.

We plan to reach 600 women, girls and boys in the final year of the project between women's groups, community workshops for young girls and boys and nutritional training for young mothers within the community.

Check out www.meruwomen.org or CIFORD Kenya on facebook for more information and photos.

Carol Townsend
SISEE Region Ambassador for the Meru Women's Garden Project
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