

# SWARI SCHOOL RENOVATIONS



REPORT FOR KATE RICHDALÉ  
MARCH 2018

SAIDIA

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PROJECT	RENOVATING SWARI PRIMARY SCHOOL
LOCATION	SWARI VILLAGE, SAMBURU COUNTY, KENYA
IMPLEMENTING ORGANISATION	SAIDIA
OBJECTIVE	TO ENHANCE STUDENT PERFORMANCE THROUGH THE UPGRADE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES
BENEFICIARIES	394 CO-ED PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
BUDGET	£10,000
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## SAIDIA

SAIDIA was established in 1985 in an extremely remote area of northern Kenya that had long been overlooked by the central government. Over the years it has fostered an unprecedented level of trust among the people with whom it works (est. 80,000). Its mission is to improve living standards by helping communities to exploit their resources to improve access to healthcare, education and livelihoods. Initially SAIDIA provided preventive and curative health services and access to education. However, with the introduction of devolved government under the 2010 Kenya Constitution, SAIDIA has been developing community awareness of good governance and leadership, particularly among women. SAIDIA has for a long time advocated for the provision of quality education for girls to give them a solid foundation for becoming leaders in adulthood. SAIDIA also promotes systemic change in the local education sector. This includes the upgrade of facilities in primary and secondary schools in areas that fall outside the remit of the government budget allocations for education.

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

Swari Primary School is situated on the dry lowland plains beyond the Mt. Kenya massif. A two-day drive north from Nairobi, it is considered remote even by local standards. The pastoral Samburu who live here have, for the most part, settled in and around Swari Village in manyattas. They are still semi-nomadic in the sense that herds are driven hundreds of miles in search of water and pasture during the dry seasons. Universal schooling is a relatively new concept for these communities. Boys are needed to herd cattle, goats and camels. Girls are required to do household chores. Early marriage – under the age of 18 – was prevalent and is a practise that SAIDIA and others try to counter through workshops and by encouraging parents to allow their daughters to stay in school.



*Road to Swari*



*Swari village*

Swari School was chosen as the pilot project for Kate Richdale's Five-Year School Renovation Program not only for its great need but also because of the dedication of the teachers and the headmaster, Julius Longoine, and their genuine concern for the students' welfare. Despite extremely poor facilities, students perform unusually well. Swari ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> among the 38 government primary schools in Samburu East sub-county. Another positive aspect was the enthusiasm of the parents, who are keen to see their children



excel in their studies and continue their education through secondary school. This desire for education is not a given concept among the pastoralist communities of Samburu County.

*Parents and teachers, headmaster Julius Longoine bottom left*

## PROBLEM & SOLUTION

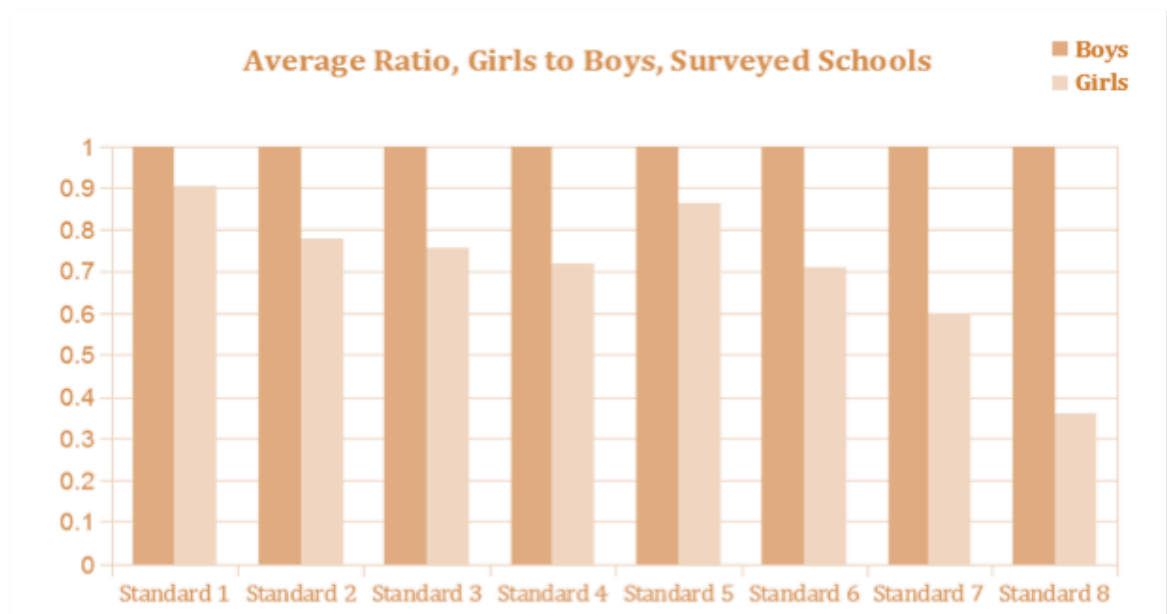
Samburu County is geographically remote and has historically been beyond the writ of national development. The illiteracy rate is around 75%. Despite compulsory primary education, universal schooling is far from an established reality. Whether education is seen as having value, by parents or children, depends on family and community context.

**Bias against girls** - Girls encounter serious obstacles, specifically the prevailing attitude that investing in a girl's education is a wasted effort as most girls are married off in their teens. From the age of 8 girls are assigned onerous domestic chores cleaning, cooking, caring for the younger children, and taking charge of the homestead whenever someone in the family is sick, hungover or has planned a day at the market. Absenteeism from school affects performance and self-esteem crumbles. Additionally, girls usually stay away from school when they have their periods as they have no sanitary protection.

These issues are well known to all schools. Individual teachers and schools, however, face them alone. They deal with very similar problems but in isolated locations, with no financial support. Teachers are well positioned to work with communities to advocate for girls, and stop problems before a girl is removed from school. However, they have no training countering the entrenched cultural bias that favours boys over girls. Some fear complaints from the community for interfering. In most cases action is not taken.

Julius Longoine stands out because he is a steadfast champion of girls' rights and believes they should have the same chances in life as boys. He has rescued many girls from early marriage so that they can continue their education, which is why he has so many girl boarders. His ratio of girl:boy primary-school graduates is well above the county average. He calls the girl students 'the endangered species' who must be cherished and protected. Julius has managed to secure a regular supply of government-issue sanitary towels for the girls who need them. When he discovered that none of the girls owned underpants, he bought them with his own money.





*Baseline study conducted by SAIDIA of random primary schools in Samburu County*



Kate's renovation project addressed the above problem in two ways. Funds were used to build an enclosed sanitary towel pit so that the girls had somewhere to dispose of their sanitary towels. The school grounds were already fenced in with a wire-mesh fence but there was no gate. Funds were used to build a solid metal gate so that no one can enter the grounds after school hours without the knowledge of the teacher on duty.

In the short term, SAIDIA hopes to see academic results improve for Samburu girls. In the long term, our objective is to engender a systemic change in parental attitudes that will allow girls to complete tertiary education and pursue useful careers.



**Dilapidated facilities** – Many schools in Samburu County do not have sufficient water, lighting, and basic equipment. The facilities at Swari were in a shocking state, even by local standards. Boarders share crowded (but gender-segregated) dormitories. The ratio of girls and boys to toilets can be as high as 50:1. At Swari it is 30:1. Swari girls and boys do not have proper bathing facilities. The girls ‘bathe’ in bowls of water either in a shed or an abandoned building that has no doors or roof and only three walls. By far the largest portion of funds from Kate’s renovation project were used to upgrade facilities. The result has made a huge improvement to the overall wellbeing of both students and teachers.

*Girls shower blocks in need of renovation*

The floors in the classrooms and the boys’ dormitory were in a deplorable state. The cement had broken and crumbled so badly that large ‘potholes’ in the floors were breaking the legs of desks and beds while young and old ankles suffered painful twists. Funds were used to resurface 8 classrooms and the boys’ dormitory.



*Before .....*



*..... after*



*No more broken ankles from jumping out of bed*



There were not enough desks in any of the classrooms. A lot of children had to squeeze in four to a desk. Learning in cramped conditions was difficult, and so was teaching. The teachers did not have proper tables and chairs. Funds were used to have a local carpenter make 60 desks, each of which seated two children comfortably. Tables and desks were made for all the teachers as well.



*Before .....*



*.....and after*

**Water harvesting** – Swari lies in an exceptionally dry area and receives minimal rainfall. Residents rely on digging for water in the riverbed below the school, the Seiya Lugga. Boys and girls fetch water for bathing and drinking from holes dug in the sand every day. A solar-powered pump also pumps water from the riverbed six days a week to supply Swari community including the health clinic. The school's weekly quota is 2,000 litres. This is used for cooking the children's and teacher's meals.

Funds from Kate's project were used to install a water-harvesting system that collects rainwater from the roofs in gutters, which debouch into 10,000-litre water tanks. The gutters were attached to the roofs of the boys' and girls' dormitories and the main classroom block. Downpipes lead into existing water tanks. However, one of these tanks has cracked so badly that the top has come off. It needs replacing. Given average rainfall distributed over the two rainy seasons (and the replacement of the broken water tank), Swari School can harvest 80,000 litres of fresh water a year. Coupled with the water pumped from the Seiya Lugga, this provides just under half the school's water requirements. If gutters and tanks can be fitted to the remaining two smaller blocks (teachers' rooms and additional classrooms), the school's water supply could be almost entirely rainfed.



*Water harvesting with new gutters on the main classroom block*



**Teachers' facilities** – The teachers' facilities at Swari are in a deplorable state. SAIDIA believes that the welfare of the teachers is as important as that of the students if a school is to perform well. Swari teachers share 10ft x 10 ft bedrooms and cook in a primitive lean-to over a wood fire. They have no privacy for bathing and must take 'showers' in their cramped bedrooms. Headmaster Julius was sharing sleeping quarters with the school administrator in a room with cracked walls. It was so tiny the door could not open properly as his bed was in the way. Kate's funds were used to build a new 12ft x 12ft for Julius which he is now sharing with the school administrator. They are both thrilled with their clean and comparatively spacious living space. A photo has not been included here, as Julius' room had not yet been painted.

*Teachers' living quarters*



*Teachers' kitchen*



## APPENDIX ONE

### BUDGET FOR SWARI SCHOOL RENOVATIONS & UPGRADE

(Kenya shillings)

Sanitary pad pit	36,460
Desks & chairs	225,000
Cementing	368,550
SAIDIA Administration	67,835
Transport	120,000
Water harvesting	204,525
Gate	30,375
Construct headmaster house	300,000

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,352,745</b>
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<b>RECEIVED</b>	1,356,700
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<b>DISBURSED</b>	1,352,745
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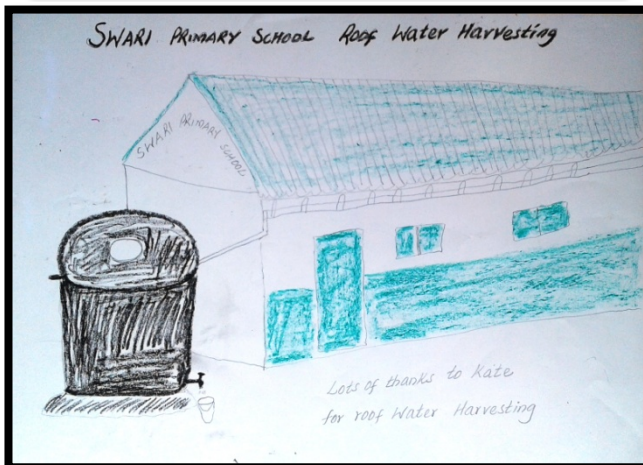
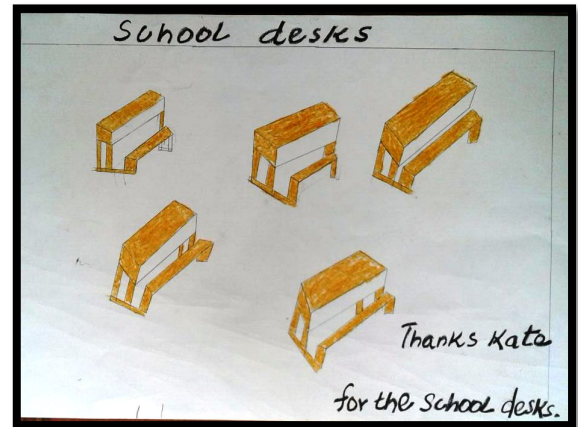
<b>REMAINING</b>	<b>3,955</b>
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### WAY FORWARD

Swari Primary School still lacks essential facilities such as more toilets and shower stalls for the students, a water harvesting system for the remain two blocks of classrooms and offices and a 10,000 litre tank to replace the broken one.

Toilet or shower stall (20 needed)	\$600 (unit cost)
Water tank (3 needed)	\$80 (unit cost)
Water harvesting for two blocks	\$1,500

## APPENDIX TWO







**THANK YOU!**