



WOMEN HELPING WOMEN, SWARI

Water project in Kenya 2009

VOSS®
foundation

VOSS FOUNDATION, WOMEN HELPING WOMEN

“Women Helping Women is about a diverse variety of women coming together to improve the lives of women in other parts of the world”



PROJECT REPORT



“I don’t know any woman who is not sustained by the warmth and strength of her friendships with other women. I like to think of Women Helping Women not just as a project that helps women gain access to a vital resource—water—but something that draws upon and celebrates the extraordinary power of female friendship.”

Lesley Hauge, Author. New York, United States

In the summer of 2009, the Voss Foundation and implementing partner Milgis Trust chose the Kenyan village of Swari as their first Women Helping Women / Kvinner hjelper Kvinner project in the arid north-central Samburu region.

A community comprising approximately 1,500 individuals, including settled residents and transient pastoralists, Swari had been trying to gain access to clean water for many years. The nearest source of clean water was five kilometers away, requiring long trips back and forth throughout the day. The distance posed a great burden, especially for the women and children who spent their

days carrying buckets of water. The effort needed to fetch clean water also hindered the effectiveness of the local dispensary and primary school.

It was decided that a comprehensive water system would be installed with a solar pump, piping to the village, installation of reservoir tanks and spigots at the dispensary, school, and a centrally-located kiosk. Milgis Trust collaborated closely with Swari’s community leaders and elders, explaining how they would work together to implement the project, appointing a water committee, training a villager in maintenance and nominating a water watchman to monitor system once it was completed. Intimate partnership with



the beneficiaries was a key element in ensuring ongoing sustainability and success of the project.

Voss Foundation supported the Swari water system through its inaugural Women Helping Women campaign. Norwegian women and others were asked to each contribute individually to collectively fund the project. The response was outstanding: so many women were impressed with the proposal that the campaign ultimately exceeded its initial fundraising goal, with donors from Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, Faroe Islands, France, England and the US joining the Norwegian originators.

In early 2010, a group of the Women Helping Women donors joined Voss Foundation staff at the opening ceremony for the Swari water system. Together the women and villagers celebrated the resounding success of a trans-national collaborative effort to change the course of history for one community by providing them with access to clean water.



WOMEN HELPING WOMEN, SWARI – at a glance

Project site: Village of Swari, Samburuland, Kenya

Population: Approx. 1,500

Project type: Well restoration; installation of solar-powered pump, piping system to transport water, storage tank and ancillary plumbing

Objective: Community access to and use of water system, water points in village, co-educational primary school and infirmary, sustainable community management of water, improved knowledge of hygiene. The distance to the nearest water source has reduced substantially (from approximately 5 kilometres to less than 1 kilometre) and the time spent to collect water has been reduced to less than 30 minutes. Access to clean drinking water will enable the Samburu people the continued existence in this arid area.

Term: March 2009 to January 2010

Local partner: Milgis Trust

Project budgeted cost: USD 44,227

Project actual cost: USD 47,134

Funded by: 192 Women, donating NOK 2.000 each



The Norwegian glass artist Camilla Prytz generously donated a hand made water droplet in glass to all the women. The necklace became a common symbol for all the women participating in this project.

Primary sponsor:

Voss of Norway ASA, providing offices, administrative support, pre-evaluation cost, etc.

Additional sponsors:

Norwegian glass artist Camilla Prytz, Blomqvist Kunsthandel, Brodins Rammeverksted, Studio Technika, Rachel K.B.Troye / Strategic Design, B 27 Reklamebyrå, CDDU, Clinique Madeleine, CIC Gruppe & Spesialreiser, Blomsterboden Slemdal, Frukthoden Slemdal, Podium Wines / Mooiplaas Wine Estate.

Project summary:

We have managed to provide clean drinking water to thousands of people in a village where there never has been water before. The villagers have been involved in the project through Milgis Trust and their in-depth knowledge of the Samburu traditions will ensure the sustainability of the project. There have been challenges in this project, which have ultimately caused an increase in the budget of 10%. The severe drought, unusual weather conditions and use of extra labour is described in more detail in this report.



OUR IMPLEMENTING PARTNER - MILGIS TRUST



The Milgis Trust is a Kenyan NGO devoted to sustaining the wildlife, habitat, and the pastoral peoples' ways of life in Northern Kenya. The Milgis ecosystem is home to the Samburu and the Rendille peoples who have lived in harmony with nature for hundreds of years. However with the rapid increases in their population and subsequently in the numbers of livestock, the demand for natural resources has grown as well. By working closely with local chiefs and regional elders, the Milgis Trust addresses these issues through a community approach to find sustainable solutions. With project funding from the Voss Foundation towards efforts aligned with both groups' missions, the Milgis Trust aims to ensure that the Swari community gains access to clean drinking water in an environmentally sustainable manner.





PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Preparation

Following the successful completion of the water project in Latakwen (Voss Foundation's first water project in the area), Milgis Trust was approached by representatives from many nearby villages who expressed their need for access to clean drinking water. Through a series of meetings, a decision was made together with the local chiefs and elders that Swari would be the site for the next Voss Foundation/Milgis Trust water project. The decision making naturally took into consideration the suitability of the village (such as track record for conflicts, years in its location, size, etc.)



Preliminary meeting with Swari elders and community leaders



Area chief Mr. Lenkaaka addresses community meeting



Installation

The village of Swari lies on an elevated position up from the Seiya River. It is common for villages in this area to situate themselves far enough from riverbed to avoid many dangers such as flooding, risk of attacks by animals in search of water, higher density of malaria mosquitoes, etc.

In the rainy season, the rivers will flood, preventing access to clean water. During the dry season, the water holes must continually be dug deeper and deeper as the water level subsides. The insufficient water will frequently become contaminated, causing waterborne and water-related diseases. The deep holes also pose a threat to the users, as both animals and humans can fall in or get hurt when trying to retrieve water.

There is a dirt road that runs through Swari and the permanent structures in the village are found along this road. On one end is the Swari Primary School, which currently has 213 students. The school also has a boarding facility for both girls and boys.



Milgis Trust staff walking the 5 km. pipeline from well to the village

The girls' dormitory houses some 39 girls, sometimes sleeping 4 in each bunk bed. The school buildings were constructed by the government and the villagers await the completion of a new building (no activity has taken place for some time).



The Kenyan government provides one meal per day to most primary schools, but in order to prepare the food water is needed. Hence, a school day often starts with the students walking to the nearest water source to fetch water for cooking. The exercise is not only disruptive to the lessons but also very burdensome. In addition, many of these children have already walked several kilometres to get to school.

Down the road from the school, towards the new water tower, are a church and an infirmary. The infirmary did not previously have access to water. Nurse Francis explained that those in need of medical attention were required to bring their own water in order to receive treatments. The infirmary is partly funded by the government. Medical supplies are transported to Swari by roads often made impassable by flooding. One of the water tanks is situated outside of the infirmary building and provides sufficient water. The installation of a faucet will greatly improve the facilities, both in terms of improved hygiene and working conditions.

Further along the dirt road is the main water tank, positioned at the most elevated point. Its position there will easily facilitate the addition of more water points down to nearby valleys. With the addition of one or more solar panels, the pump will support such further outlets.



Digging trenches for pipes



Testing sites for the "kisima," or water source



The trenches for pipes were dug by the villagers. Previous experience shows that if the community contributes to the project, they develop a sense of ownership – it is in their interest to protect what they consider to be their property. The plan was to allocate four metres for a person to work on. However, the severe drought that Northern Kenya and surrounding areas suffered in 2009 made it impossible for the villagers to carry out heavy work. Not only was there a severe lack of water and food, but the drought caused many villagers to be sick, having consumed unsafe water (one of the main transmitters of cholera).

Swari residents lost many of their cattle due to the lack of water. The herd represents a very important food source and is also the Samburus' primary livelihood and currency. Cattle will be sold to pay for tuition, hospitalisation and plays an important role in cultural and traditional ceremonial purposes.

Realising that the villagers were unable to dig the trenches, Milgis Trust initiated a food-for-work program. This ensured that the people of Swari got through the

drought without suffering loss of lives. The food-for-work program resulted in an overspending, Note 1 in the accounts.

Proper situation of the well was imperative. There are numerous water holes along the river bed, used by both humans and animals. The key was to find a water hole that would have good quality and sufficient water, even during the dry season. An appropriate site was located and the bore hole was deepened, then sealed and the pump installed.

Transportation of the materials was difficult due to heavy rain which caused rivers to flood,. After the flooding had stopped, the dirt roads had to be repaired, further delaying transportation. The difficult weather conditions thus increased transportation costs, see Note 2 of the accounts.

Milgis Trust plans to introduce a small levy on water usage. Such contribution will help encourage water conservation and go toward to the cost of future maintenance and repairs.



Conversation with Stella Deane – Milgis Trust

How many people are in the village?

1500... but the village lies on the route to the Lolkunianin livestock market, which hundreds of people from the western side of [the] Seiya River get to and, in the process, get water from the village on their way to and from the market.

How many had access to clean water before our project?

None

How many now?

Upwards of 2000

How many people serve on the water committee?

Seven; 4 women and 3 men

What do they do?

Oversee the day to day running of the system and ensure proper use and maintenance of the whole system.

How have people learned about conservation techniques?

Awareness creation through community meetings and video shows, informal meetings with our scouts and constant word of mouth through the Milgis Trust

What are the plans for optimizing sustainability?

The committee is possibly planning to put in a small levy on the use of water by families, one shilling is proposed for a 20 litre container. This levy will be used for repairs and maintenance in the future; Milgis Trust will work with the Swari water management committee to oversee this and consider all consequences.

How has the water project affected health?

...[W]e know for sure this will have a big positive impact on the health of the villagers. The project is still young but water-related ailments like cholera, dysentery and amoeba-related problems will be prevented by the use of the clean drinking water. In Latakwen [site of Voss Foundation's first Samburu project] all the surrounding villages were affected by a cholera outbreak and Latakwen was spared because of the clean drinking water in place.



Women in one of their songs at Swari told of how they used to carry water on their back and how some got back problems. During the initial meeting, Mrs. Rebecca, one of the women in the choir, told of cases of women miscarrying because of the weight of water they carry up the steep slopes. They also talked of children getting chest problems as they carried water up to the school in heavy containers.

How has the water project affected education?

Children used to go down to the lugga [riverbed] to get water for... use in school, be it for cooking, washing or even construction work in the school. This disrupts the learning activities and eventually it affects the performance of children. When children come up the slopes they get very tired and their concentration levels are affected; also the time they used to get water could have otherwise been learning time.

How has the water project affected animals and food?

...[S]mall stock like goats' kids and lambs will get access to water close by; this will eventually reduce human predator conflict. There have been cases of leopards and

other predators killing kids as they go to the lugga... to get water. Food quality will definitely improve as the water used to prepare food is now clean and food contamination will be a thing of the past.

How has the water project affected women and girls?

Culturally fetching water is a woman's domain, the distance to the water point is therefore mainly a concern of the women. By bringing water closer to the people this reduces the burden on women and girls. Some families have kept their girls at home so that they help the family in fetching water, which bars them from going to school. This project will open the opportunity for the girls to get an education. The chest problem reported earlier because of carrying heavy containers are also mainly girls and women.

How has the water project affected children?

This project will reduce incidents of child labour as children are used to fetch water for the family. Child performance in school will improve. Child health will improve as the diseases related to dirty water will be prevented.



BUDGET AND ACCOUNTS

Qty.	Specifications	Budgeted Cost - USD	Accounted Cost – USD	JUSTIFICATION
1	Lorentz Solar Pump PS 1200 HR 07-2	2,365	2,365	
8	165W Solar Panels	8,760	8,760	
1	Frame for Solar	625	625	
1	Earth Cable and rod	100	100	
1	Lighting protections Delta 302	150	150	
1	Lorentz PV Array disconnect	275	275	
25	Meters 3 Core submersible cable	232	232	
25	Meters Water level probe cable	35	35	
2	Splice kits	100	100	
2	Tanks (1 No. 10,000 lits; 1 No. 5,000 lts)	1,950	1,950	
1	Pipe and tank fittings etc	5,135	5,135	
1	Water level probe protector	100	100	
5000	Meters 32mm 10 Bar PVC Pipe	5,950	5,950	
	Extra hardware required including well reinforcement, cement, steel sheeting, timber, sockets		191	Change of site plans
	Opening of the water/preparations		497	Preparations for visit of Women Helping Women group
1	Water Kiosks	1,250	1,250	
1	Labor	2,500	4,287	Under-budgeted. See Note 1 below.
1	Transport of materials and site visits etc.	2,200	4,831	Weather conditions, extra mileage and extra site visits See Note 2 below.
5 Years	Water Bailiff salary (local community employee)	6,000	6,000	See Note 3 below.
1	Add 10% Contingency	3,000		
	TOTAL COST	40,727	42,833	
	Project evaluation	3,500	5,886	See Note 4 below.
	TOTAL COST	44,227	48,719	



COMMENTS TO THE BUDGET AND ACCOUNTS

Voss Foundation aims to stay within each and every budget for our projects. This water project has been implemented in a very remote area where unforeseen issues like costs of transportation, weather delays, one of the biggest droughts in Northern Kenya for decades, make such a project quite complicated. Considering such issues, we believe that this project has been a great success.

Due to an outpouring of support from women donors, this project was oversubscribed. The surplus amount has been transferred to our second Women Helping Women project in the village of Ndonyo Nasipa.

Notes to the Accounts:

Note 1: The overage on labour was related to the work-for-food program which Milgis Trust initiated due to the shortage of water and food caused by the drought. The villagers were simply too devastated and exhausted to muster any other will than that to survive. The program not only helped the project to be completed faster but it also prevented deaths in the village.

Note 2: The overspend on transportation was due to issues related to the drought, the work-for-food program, and preparation for the Women Helping Women trip in January 2010.

Note 3: The salary for the water watchman for five years, as well as training of a water technician to handle light repairs, will ensure proper management and continuation for the project. With the introduction of the water levy in due course, the village should be able to have a sustainable water system (ensuring continuity of the project and its benefits after project completion). Some community members may not be able or willing to pay for the water.

Note 4: project evaluation costs – by USD 2,386. Voss Foundation was able to cover these additional expenses from its general funds, raised in large part by the sale of the Stuart Franklin/Magnum Photos limited-edition prints from Mali.

Some of these costs have been covered by the budgeted contingency money. We are dedicated to the constant improvement of our projects and the realized costs of Swari have informed our discussions with Milgis Trust on work plans and budgets for future projects. The Board of Directors of Voss Foundation have decided that the labour and transportation costs not covered by the contingency money will be covered by the surplus funding. Hence, the amount transferred to Women helping Women Ndonyo Nasipa will be approximately USD 24,000 (over NOK 155,000).



OPENING CEREMONY

In February 2010 a group of Norwegian and Danish women accompanied Voss Foundation staff on a project evaluation trip to Kenya, where they had the chance to attend the opening ceremony of the Swari water project. While the Voss Foundation representatives were able to monitor the project's success, the funders got the opportunity to see firsthand what an impact they had made on the lives of Kenyan women and children. The direct relationship between donor and recipient is central to the Women Helping Women concept. Samburu culture places great importance on celebrations, such as the water ceremony, with community-wide involvement.

We learned that this is a way of showing respect to the important event for the villagers of Swari.



Women Helping Women group walks to Swari



Samburu women honor their Norwegian friends



Voss Foundation European Representatives Anette Krosby and Cecilie Malm Brundtland celebrate with the women of Swari



Norwegian Women Helping Women members in front of a reservoir tank they funded



We have to talk about water - water is life
We have to think about water - water is life
We have to dream about water - water is life
We have to sing about water - water is life
We have to drink water - water is life
Without water there is no life.

*Poem read by Everline Zesamaja,
a Swari school girl, at the opening ceremony*

Voss Foundation would like to thank Milgis Trust for their cooperation, dependability, responsible implementation, and valuable reporting.

We are grateful to all of our sponsors for their support, without which we could not have guaranteed 100% of donations directly to this water system for the people of Swari.

Last but not least, a most special thanks to all the Women who participated in this first Women Helping Women project.

WHW Swari Photo Credits:

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P1: Sarah Pring, **P2:** Rachel K.B. Troye, **P5:** Rachel K.B. Troye, **P6:** Milgis Trust

P7: Milgis Trust, **P8:** Milgis Trust, **P14:** Rachel K.B. Troye, **P15:** Rachel K.B. Troye

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