



PROJECT SUMMARY

Safe Motherhood, Kajiado 1998-1999

Background:

Sub-Saharan Africa is the poorest place on Earth. It has the fastest population growth and faces a worsening food and water crisis. Economies are not expanding and trade gaps widen with aid declining. At the same time cash crops prices have fallen and tourists are finding other holiday destinations. Families are realising that it is increasingly hard to support large families and there is evidence to show that families are choosing to have fewer children. Reproductive health covers many areas of people's lives from the quality of life and nutrition to the freedom of choosing and economic stability. ICROSS has become increasingly active in sexual and reproductive health. This programme supported sections of semi desert where morbidity and infection was high.

The scattered rural populations in the semi desert had over 26% of all children below weight with high rates of underweight infants and recurrent seasonal weight drops in children 5-7 years.

ICROSS Role:

It was the role of ICROSS to ensure the project was designed through the values, belief systems and traditional outcomes of the Maasai nomads. The outcome was measured with the support of the Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland and the primary health training was designed with the help of Professor Morley of the Department of Tropical Child Health, Institute of Child Health, UCL.

**Kajiado District Facts**

Population	406,000
Tribe	Maasai
Household Size	4.2
Geographic Area	22,000km ²
People per km²	19
HIV/AIDS prevalence	4%
Average Annual Income	US\$ 400
% in Paid Employment	32%
% Below poverty line	39%
Infant mortality	7.4%
Primary source of income	Livestock

*Source: Regional Government Statistics, AIDS in Kenya 2001
Note: HIV prevalence is of pop aged 10+. % in paid employment is % of economically active population*



Mobile, rural open-air clinic in Kajiado

The project was implemented by four trained Maasai health workers who are part of the ICROSS medical teams. Each trainer has a minimum of ten years experience in Community Health. The Maasai are traditional nomadic pastoralists who guard their traditions and customs carefully. At the start of this project we used baseline data on the health profiles of each community gathered as part of a broader programme funded by the Japanese and Danish Governments.

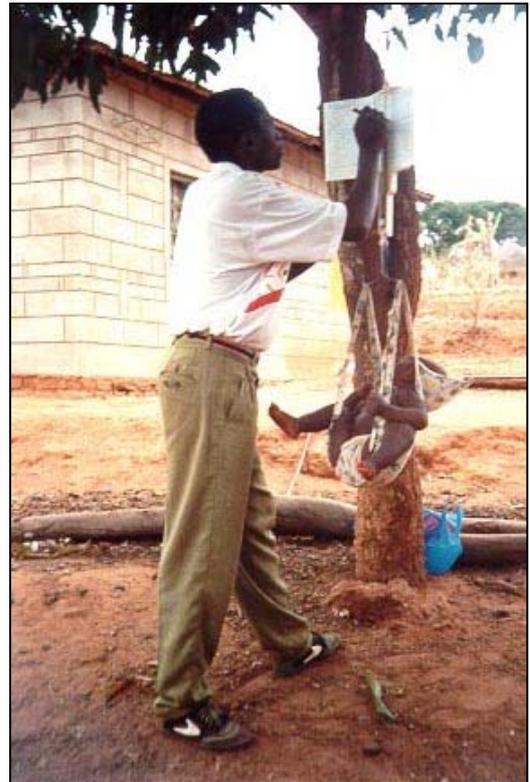
The Project:

Safe motherhood is a dynamic programme that teaches mothers how to look after their children and themselves. Training was an important part of the Safe Motherhood project. It covered a curriculum of topics ranging from diet during pregnancy to child spacing and nutrition of infants. Methods of feces disposal, personal hygiene, growth monitoring. Rehabilitation of malnourished children and prevention of infectious diseases were shared in culturally appropriate ways.

Aside from training, activities covered: Water source protection, child washing leaky tins, diarrhoeal control, intestinal worm prevention, immunisation, bacteria testing and women's group discussing reproductive health.

Achievements... ICROSS...

- Responded to mother and child infections and reduction of water borne diseases.
- Taught mothers child monitoring skills used in early detection of child malnutrition.
- Promoted effective hygiene, sanitation, nutritional care and breastfeeding.
- Trained mothers in 72 homesteads in four locations in safe motherhood.
- Established three new women's groups within the project areas in order to set up income generating activities for long term sustainability.
- Provided water protection to two water sources, decontaminated 6 water sources.
- Improved response times from detection to treatment of malnutrition.
- Improved recovery in children identified losing weight early.
- 63% increase in use of oral re-hydration therapy for children with dehydration.
- 8.4% reduction in underweight children.
- 7.8% increase in immunisation.
- Treated 1,042 children for intestinal worms.
- Established solar disinfection of contaminated drinking water in 94 homesteads with a 41% fall in acute diarrhoea over the previous year.
- 79% of Mothers completed Safe-Motherhood training.
- Established three village health committees comprised of mothers and grandmothers.



Growth Monitoring in Kajiado

How you can help:

This project was delivered with a grant from Electric Aid on £2,400 and a contribution from ICROSS Ireland on £1,500. More Safe Motherhood projects are needed and ICROSS continuously seek donors for projects like this. If you or your organisation is willing to sponsor a project similar to this, please contact the ICROSS programme development unit on icross@kenyaweb.com

Donors:

