

# Meru Women's Garden Project 2016-2019

## About Meru Women's Garden Project

Meru County has a largely rural population with HIV/AIDs prevalent in the region. Meru Women's Garden Project will support some of the poorest women-led households in Kenya, and is entirely focussed on providing opportunities to women and girls who may never otherwise be given the chance to earn an income, and gives them status within their community. It fully embraces the three key areas at the heart of SIGBI's Programme Focus Goals – Educate, Empower and Enable. Improved food production and education will support women and girls to transform their lives and those of others through a process of cascade learning and mentoring thereby reducing poverty, improving health and increasing employment.

The following data gives a clear indication of the need for this project:

- 41% of women and girls are grossly or borderline malnourished
- 43% live below the poverty line of £1 per day, with more in rural areas
- 55% live a hand to mouth existence in agriculture using methods which degrade the land
- 93% use local trees for firewood, impacting hugely on deforestation
- 22% have no formal education
- 11% complete secondary education
- 8% achieve minimum levels for literacy compared to 85% in Nairobi
- 9% achieve minimum levels for numeracy compared to 87% in Nairobi

The Project aims to:

**Educate** women to increase their knowledge and skills so that they can use the most efficient, organic methods for food production to:

- reduce extreme hunger by becoming self-sufficient with sustainable gardens at home
- improve girls' attendance and achievement in secondary school by creating breakfast clubs and sustainable food gardens, so that they are not hungry and are better able to learn

**Empower** women through education to find a voice within their community to:

- raise their standard of living above the poverty line
- gain the respect of elders and others, achieve equal representation and take on more prominent roles
- create productive and decent employment by engaging women and girls with leadership skills to take on training and mentoring roles

**Enable** women leading a household to create their own employment through growing and selling their crops, or as tutors and mentors to:

- significantly reduce extreme poverty by enabling and promoting income generating activities
- promote opportunities to cascade training, form farming cooperatives and establish mentoring
- increase local women's share of paid employment

## HOW will the money raised by SIGBI Clubs be spent?

The project will be structured to expand over a three year period and numbers can be scaled up. With funding from SIGBI, even more women can be trained enabling more households to become self-sufficient and begin to move out of poverty.

Overview of current spending:

## **2016 – £3,840.74**

- The first Alternative Rite of Passage weekend (60 girls)
- Planning and preparation of stages 1&2 of the agricultural training

## **2017 – £31,407.26**

- Year long training of 198 participants
- Two ARP sessions and one boy's session.
- This doesn't include allocation for identification of the 2nd intake for stages 1&2 of the agricultural training but this should not exceed £2,000.

## **2018 – in planning stages**

- Currently uncertain but based on the current fundraising total we have over £50,000 to budget with and we're expecting that to increase, meaning we can work with at least the same number of women, girls and boys, hopefully more.

In the original plan in the bid we had planned to work with 360 women in total over the three year period. If fundraising continues at the current pace, we should be able to increase that to nearly 600.

### ***In addition to these women, we're aiming to work with:***

- 350 girls to promote staying in school, health education and the alternative rite of passage to FGM
- 300 boys to promote health education, women's rights and reducing their expectation of girls undergoing FGM
- 90 young mothers on nutritional training.

### **Agricultural training:**

Each group of women will receive a one year package of equipment, training and mentoring. The training will be cascaded year on year via the groups.

Using an established model, the project will provide seeds, agricultural equipment and relevant technical advice. The women will be trained and mentored throughout and have access to formal and informal agricultural learning opportunities.

*Eco-Stoves will be introduced to reduce the degradation of the forest. This aims to reduce the use of wood by three fifths.*

### **What's the cost of training per woman?**

Based on the Y1 intake, the cost of the training per woman is **£171.36**.

### **This cost includes:**

- Identification and selection of the groups
- Weekly training at the group's' locations
- Monthly in depth training for group leaders held at CIFORD centre
- Tools and seeds:
  - Tools include spades, forks, machetes, rakes, wheelbarrows – these are to share between women (approximately one in three – one wheelbarrow per group)
  - Energy stoves (one each)
  - Seeds include amaranth, spider weed, kale, onion, butternut, black nightshade, mangoes, papaya and moringa (for all women)

- Water tanks, accessories and transport (approximately one between four but this is dependent on their current access to water and need in each location)
- Their graduation ceremony at the end of the year
- Staff, office and travel costs at CIFORD to support the training

## **Who is SIGBI's Partner Organisation for the Meru Women's Garden Project?**

The Meru Women's Garden Project will be run on the ground by CIFORD (Community Initiative for Rural Development) and overseen by our partner, Child.org. Detailed reporting systems exist between the two organisations and these will be extended to include regular reports to SIGBI. Study tours will be welcomed (at SIGBI members' own expense).

CIFORD is inspirationally led by Margaret Ikiara, a member of SI Meru. Margaret has 27 years of experience in husbandry, agricultural economics, teaching and community development and she is dedicated to improving the lives of women in her home region of Meru.

See the [Meru Women's Garden Project website](#) for more information, to sign up to regular updates and to download the Project Leaflet.

## **Products Available in support of the Meru Women's Garden Project:**

### **Meru Women Garden Project lapel badges**

SI Canterbury are selling lapel badges for £2.00 each to raise funds for the Meru Women's Garden Project.

### **Buy jam and raise money for the Meru Women's Garden Project**

Meru Herbs is a women-led cooperative working in rural Kenya. An all natural organic range of tomato sauces & exotic jams made Meru herbs a popular Fair Trade favourite in Japan, Italy and now the UK.

JTS are a Scottish company who supply Meru Herbs in the UK. SI Hamilton have secured a deal with them to help raise money for the Meru Women Garden's Project.

“For all orders for JTS' Meru Herbs products placed by the Soroptimist groups during the 3 year project (from now until November 2019) we will make a 10p per jar contribution to the Soroptimists' Meru Women's Garden Project. The plan would be for this support to be passed directly to SIGBI, probably on a quarterly basis.”