



# Samburu Youth Education Fund

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**  
FISCAL YEAR 2020



# 2020 REVIEW

Where do we begin to summarize 2020? The year started off normal. Scholarships were awarded, students went off to school, and we embarked on our usual planning for programming for the rest of the year.

Of course, in March 2020, everything changed. Schools closed, and would remain closed for the rest of the year. Gathering people together was neither advisable nor allowed, preventing us from convening our youth and women for any workshops, training or in-person support. Regions like Samburu seemed like some of the most potentially vulnerable places in the world, with its remoteness, limited medical care capacity, and a population with many individuals who are older or with underlying conditions.

Early on, as stress mounted about the potential impact of COVID, SYEF embraced a responsibility to be a leader in the community on COVID response. We went door to door distributing sanitizers, soaps and information; we made hundreds and hundreds of masks to distribute; we arranged the delivery and distribution of food to vulnerable families; we raised funds and distributed weekly stipends to women-led households; we purchased and distributed study guides to our scholarship recipients; and we checked in with our female scholarship recipients to advise on how to maintain their health and safety while at home.

COVID showed us that we are an adaptable, empathetic and nimble organization, something we knew about ourselves but had not been tested to the extent 2020 did. While the work of our organization is beginning to resemble something more typical, we've learned a lot about the assets of our organization, and will build on those strengths as we establish a new "normal" for the organization.



# COVID-19 RESPONSE

In the first few weeks of COVID, when uncertainty persisted about how long schools would be shut down and our work halted, our SYEF staff and board in Samburu recognized an urgent need and opportunity in the community for sharing information and distributing supplies. There were, in general, insufficient public resources at a local level to guide and support the community about what to do; working in partnership with the area chief, we led an on-the-ground effort to educate households and provide them initial supplies.

## **Personal protection supplies**

SYEF purchased hand soap, sanitizer and masks, and shared them with hundreds of households in the region, along with sharing information known at the time about how the virus spreads and how to minimize risk. We targeted households with vulnerable individuals, such as older people and those with illnesses. As some supplies became less available, we hired two local women, including an SYEF alumni, to make hundreds of masks, which we distributed to more households throughout the community.

## **Food security**

When it became apparent that the virus and higher levels of unemployment would likely be around for awhile, we added food security to our response. Members of our staff purchased literally truckloads of food, which was distributed to households from a distribution point we set up at a local school. Again, we targeted the most vulnerable households with this support.

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# COVID-19 RESPONSE, CONTINUED

## **Weekly stipends to women-led households**

As the realities settled in that COVID would likely be around for many more months, we added another strategy to our response, this one in support of the 25-30 women that are a close part of our SYEF community. Given that women are the primary caretakers of children and also carry most of the responsibility for managing their households, we provided a weekly monetary stipend for seven months to help offset the lack of tourist-related income. While the stipend was modest, an evaluation of the impact of the stipend showed that the women allocated most of the funds toward food, and that it helped lessen, although not eliminate, their stress for how to meet some of the basic needs of their family.

Overall, SYEF took on activity and support that was not part of our usual routine, focusing on basic needs and preventing the spread of a disease. It demonstrated the character and empathy of our Samburu-based staff and board, who worked tirelessly to help assure the well-being of their community. Now in the first half of 2021, we've been able to return to much of the work that is more central to our mission of youth leadership and empowerment, and carrying many of the lessons learned during the "COVID era" to how we operate.



# SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

In the first few months of 2020 before COVID-19 led to school shutdowns across Kenya, we hosted our annual celebration with nine recent graduates and 11 new scholarship recipients, their friends and family, our SYEF board, and a number of other guests and visitors. The accomplishment of our graduates was celebrated again later with a day trip to the Ol Pejeta Conservancy, a wildlife park in the shadows of Mount Kenya. By investing in high school scholarships, and celebrating the educational achievements of SYEF recipients with their community, we are contributing to shifts in how this region values and prioritizes formal education.





# D.I.G. ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Despite the challenges of COVID, we were able to launch our new DIG Entrepreneurship program, albeit later in the year than originally planned. The program provides opportunities for SYEF alumni to propose a small business, participate in workshops about the fundamentals of running a business, and receive start-up funds to launch their idea. Their businesses must meet a few requirements: it should address a community need, demonstrate innovation or uniqueness, and include at least one female member on the team.

The Belinda Fruit Parlour is a great example of the goals we aim to pursue with the DIG program. Started by two SYEF alumna -- Elizabeth and Linda -- the juice bar serves up glasses of pineapple, mango, orange and other juices to the community, one of few businesses like it in town. The motive behind the business is to promote better nutrition and health in the community.

"In my community not many people take fruits, so we are promoting the health benefits of fruits and also giving people something that is nice to drink," said co-founder Elizabeth.

Our entrepreneurs have learned the excitement and challenges of running their own business, quickly learning that success comes with patience and relentless hustle. Last year was our pilot year for the program, working out our proof of concept while supporting a small number of businesses. DIG Entrepreneurship continues in 2021, with the launch of several new businesses later in the year.



# SUPPORTING WOMEN

Women in Samburu face a myriad of challenges, rooted in a long history of policies and norms that deny women the rights needed to allow their full potential to come to fruition. While those policies and norms are changing, change doesn't occur quickly. Further, during COVID, women endured a bulk of the stress and responsibility for maintaining the well-being of their households, yet must do so with marginal resources and empowerment compared to men.

SYEF implemented a number of initiatives this past year in response to the additional stress and burdens that COVID placed on women, including:

**A mentoring program for young women in SYEF's scholarship program.** With young women at home for most of the year instead of school, and so many more people in the community unemployed and idle, the risk to young women's safety and well-being increased. SYEF checked-in with our young women throughout the year, providing guidance on how to protect and advocate for themselves.

**Online beadwork sales and fundraising for women-led households.** We raised thousands of dollars via online beadwork sales and charitable giving to support women-led households with food and stipends, after tourism-based income abruptly ended.

**Listening sessions with women's groups.** When it was allowed for small groups to gather again, we convened numerous small groups of women to discuss what they need to achieve the needs and goals for themselves and their households. These listening sessions resulted in a number of salient thoughts and feedback, and we are working on our next steps to respond to the women's input in ways that will help them overcome barriers to their success.

# 2020 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Since SYEF's start in 2010, smart and strategic spending has been a driving ethic of our financial decision-making. Every proposed expenditure is measured against our mission and goals.

## 2020 Expenditures

|                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| Program:        | 90% |
| Administration: | 8%  |
| Fundraising:    | 2%  |

Financial expenditures are just one measure of performance; we also track non-financial indicators to identify our successes and areas in need of improvement:

- \* Our weekly stipends provided to female-led households were at least partially used by 100% of recipients toward achieving greater food security for their families
- \* Our evaluation of our alumni indicated more than half were able to continue their education after secondary school, in some type of post-secondary education
- \* For every one alumni that is employed following graduation, they are able to support at least one additional family member's education within a year of their employment.
- \* Of alumni in salaried positions, average compensation is more than six times the poverty level defined by the Kenya Government for Samburu.
- \* In terms of improvements, our entrepreneurship program can more effectively prepare students in setting realistic short-term expectations, and further emphasize the need for persistence and innovation through follow-up support to the entrepreneurs.





# SIMPLE WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT SYEF TODAY



## Register your Supermarket Loyalty Card

If you are a member of a shopper loyalty program at any Kroger-owned supermarket (including King Soopers and City Market), take a few minutes to register your loyalty number on-line and designate SYEF as the beneficiary. We receive a donation based on percentage of sales.



## Enroll in an Automatic Donation

We would love to reallocate more of our time and money away from fundraising and toward direct program support. Enrollment in an automatic donation -- annually or monthly -- helps reduce the resources needed to raise money. To help us maximize direct program impact, please enroll! [www.samburuyouth.org/donate](http://www.samburuyouth.org/donate)



## Shop for Samburu Merchandise

In addition to education, investing in women is another strategy that is proven to lead to positive outcomes in the developing world. You can support women artisans from Samburu through purchase of their beadwork, and proceeds support the artisan as well as SYEF programs. Click on the Etsy logo to the left or search "SupportSamburu" on the Etsy site.



## Go to Smile.Amazon when you Shop Amazon

We know Amazon has become among the worlds' biggest retail companies. If you shop at Amazon, start at [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) instead of their standard site, designate SYEF as your beneficiary organization, and then shop as usual. We receive a donation based on a percentage of sales.

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