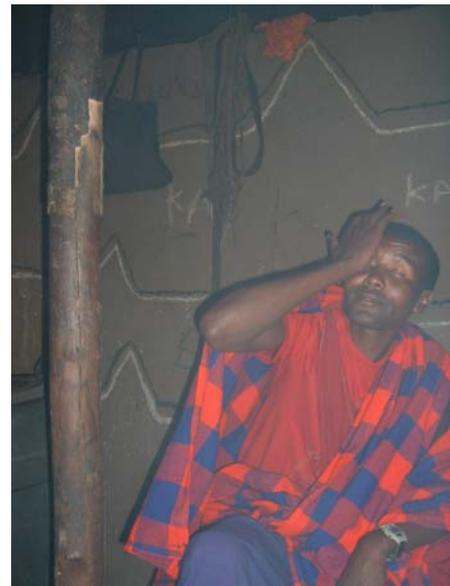


## Kisaru Community Project, Kenya



Kisaru in Maasai means 'securing' i.e. a project that is securing a better future for the community. Kisaru was founded in March 2006 by Ben Longisa a Maasai living in Enkereri Village in the Masai Mara, Kenya. The project has to date secured many benefits for the Maasai tribe living in the Mara Triangle, adjacent to the Masai Mara Game Reserve, including solar power to the local school, farming development (e.g. bee keeping) and an education programme addressing the negatives of female genital 'mutilation'.

In response to a recent health survey carried out in the Maasai villages in the Mara Triangle, Kisaru is embarking on a programme of activities to address its findings. The survey revealed that many of the villagers were suffering from chest and respiratory conditions and eye infections (some leading to blindness) as a result of smoke from the fires that constantly smoulder in Maasai homes. These fires are used for cooking, for heating water and as a deterrent at night against mosquitoes. Traditionally-built Maasai houses have little ventilation and no chimneys, hence the smoke has no escape.



The health survey also highlighted high incidences of diarrhoea and typhoid in the villages. Until recent times the Maasai tribe were nomadic and hence the need for sanitation systems in the form of long-drop toilets were not necessary. Additionally Maasai cattle were always on the move and hence there was no build up of cow dung, like is now seen in the villages, that attract flies in large numbers. When the Kenyan government forcibly settled the Maasai into group ranches across Maasailand, effectively controlling their movement within administrative boundaries, the issue of sanitation was not considered.



The situation has now worsened as the Maasai have now been located on the same pieces of land for many years, and the health issues as described above are now widespread. As a marginalised tribe in Kenya there is very little intervention from government in this area. As a result the

community in the Mara Triangle have taken the issue into their own hands, have sought technical advice, and are now embarking on an ambitious programme of health education and construction in the community of:

1. Chimneys in traditional houses to vent the smoke
2. Village long drop toilets

Construction costs (materials and labour) are 16,000 KS per toilet (£125) and 20,000 KS per chimney (£150). The education programme has no associated costs as community members have been trained and these villagers give their time on a voluntary basis to the project. The High Five Club would initially like to fund one toilet and one chimney, increasing to two of each when funds allowed (in two separate villages). The aim is that as the community see the benefit of these 'showcase' toilets and chimneys they will expand the initiative themselves.



The project is active in 5 villages, hence benefiting circa. 1,000 people.

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