



Annual Report 2020



**David Mutheng
Chairman**

Dear reader,

I hereby present to you the 2020 annual report of the Marastich Care Initiative.

Attached you can find an overview of all activities and achieved results for the year 2020.

We thank you greatly for your support during this unusual time.

With kind regards,

David Muthengi Musili,

MAIN OBJECTIVES

The Marastich Care Initiative is a community-based organization of the Oloonkolin Mara Hospital. Our goal is to help the people of Trans Mara sub-counties and surrounding areas to improve their living circumstances and conditions. We do that by working with residents in setting up projects that provide access to education and information in the fields of hygiene, health, agriculture and trade.

Back Ground

Trans Mara is a district in Kenya with a projected population of around 800,000 people, with the dominant ethnic groups being the Maasai and Kalenjin. Its capital and largest town is Kilgoris.

Trans Mara is situated in the southern part of the Great Rift Valley in Narok County. The county borders the Republic of Tanzania and six other counties – Nakuru, Bomet, Nyamira, Kisii, Migori and Kajiado. It is rich in terms of nature with the world famous Maasai Mara National Reserve, as well as Mau Forest located within its borders. Narok is largely inhabited by the Masaai that have exchanged their pastoral lifestyles for fixed settlement or a semi-nomadic lifestyle. Small scale agricultural production has become an alternative way for households to survive however, having livestock remains very important. Not only for survival, but also for social status within the community. Due to a lack of grazing areas, animal feed and water, many Masaai are confronted with unhealthy and dying livestock, which remains a household's most valuable possession. Furthermore, due to their previous pastoral culture, many of the community members have not attended school and lack therefore the necessary knowledge and skills to start up a business and/or to recognize other economic opportunities that would stimulate their development.

Many communities in Trans Mara still live below the national poverty line, while the population continues to grow by 4.6% per year. Many of them live in dire conditions with a lack of potable water, sanitation and no access to good health care. Diseases such as HIV, AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, respiratory infections (pharyngitis), typhus, cholera and malnutrition are all causes for a high morbidity and mortality rate. And women have 8 to 10 children which is an absurdly high average.





Activities 2020

2020 was an eventful year to say the least. The coronavirus outbreak has taken over the world, daily life came to a halt, schools closed their doors, and everyone was chained to their homes. The virus posed a huge challenge to our operations in Kenya, but thanks to your support and our great team of local health workers, we are pleased to announce that we have achieved our goals for 2020.

This year we started our project for sustainable eye care. In collaboration with the Oloonkolin Foundation and the Dutch ophthalmologists from the SLAH foundation, a local medical team for ophthalmology has been set up and general screenings are carried out in local hospitals and villages. During these screenings, patients will be treated for their ophthalmic complaints, but also their underlying health problems can be diagnosed and treated in time. Due to this approach the project also contributes to improving the general health of the population. Our annual goal for this project was to stabilize a medical ophthalmology team and to set up an eye care unit in Trans Mara east, and we succeeded in achieving this goal. Although the provision of ophthalmic care was temporarily stopped due to the coronavirus, we were able to deploy the ophthalmic medical team immediately in the fight against the corona virus. This team has contributed to providing care and education to the community about the coronavirus and supported the COVID-19 emergency response team.

The effect of covid 19 on the community

COVID -19 is known to be particularly dangerous to people with underlying health problems. And a significant portion of the population in Trans Mara falls into that vulnerable high-risk category, contracting and spreading the virus rapidly. This can unnecessarily affect countless lives and expedite the collapse of the health system in this country. Handwashing is a simple tool to promote public health and is one of the most effective ways to prevent disease transmission. However, for most people living in Trans Mara there are no at home handwashing facilities and not only is this small action of washing hands with clean water and soap very effective in preventing COVID-19 transmission, but it also assists in preventing diarrhea, cholera and typhoid.

COVID-19 has also had an impact on the Masai community in Narok county by disrupting businesses and important traditions. To this day these traditions are carried out by the famous Kenya's Masai Warriors who are renowned for their rituals and customs. Fears over the pandemic have forced them to cancel their semi-nomadic lifestyle including all the traditional celebrations but has also affected them economically by suspending their traditional markets where they trade their cattle.





ACHIEVED RESULTS 2020

1 Strengthening existing national strategies for combating and preventing blindness in Trans Mara by:

- Setting up a medical team to supervise eye care.
- Treat children and adults that have been diagnosed with eye infections and allergies.
- Refer visually impaired children and adults who have been diagnosed with cataracts and glaucoma to a specialized eye hospital in Kilgoris and Kisii.
- Fighting against eye infections due to an unsanitary lifestyle.

2 Improving the quality of eye care by:

- Setting up an ophthalmology department at the Trans Mara East hospital.
- Setting up a minor ophthalmic surgery room at Marastich Hospital.
- Drawing up protocols for the measles vaccination program.
- Eye screening of 400 patients, including 242 children and 158 adults.
- Follow-ups of 102 patients, including 52 children and 50 adults.
- Introduction of refractive error screening within the community.
- Diagnosing visually impaired schoolchildren and teachers with uncorrected refractive errors and correcting their vision with prescription glasses.

3 Improving the general health of the community by:

- The Construction of 5 water tanks in 4 schools and in 3 healthcare facilities.
- Maintaining good general hygiene in



4 Provide jobs, income and practical training for health workers, masons, teachers and unemployed youth.

- Train of 1 clinical officer, 2 local nurses, 4 assistants and 5 local health workers.

5 Strengthening the government's CDC COVID-19 guidelines.

6 The following equipment has been purchased:

1. Slit lamp.
2. Refraction box/ trial frames.
3. Ophthalmoscope diagnostic set.
4. Auto refractor
5. Auto lens meter digital focimeter.

7 Reduce human-to-human transmission of COVID-19 by:

- Training 30 COVID-19 ambassadors to educate about the coronavirus and thus raise general awareness of the pandemic within the community.
- Providing personal protective equipment (PPE) to health workers.
- Provided information and education for health professionals about the safe use of personal protective equipment.
- The Construction of 15 handwashing stations in health centers, schools and households.
- Handing out face masks, soap and disinfection kits.
- Increase community responsibility with regards to hand hygiene, adequate potable water storage, wearing face masks in public and social distancing.





WELL ON OUR WAY, WHATS NEXT?

Due to last year's COVID pandemic, many schools have just started opening their doors, but still most children are unable to attend school. That is why we want to work on improving the conditions in schools, so that the school becomes accessible again for every child. We also want to tackle the drastically increased school absenteeism due to a lack of expensive face masks and sanitary pads for menstruating girls, teenage pregnancies and lack of potable water in schools.

At the same time, we want to continue to work towards our goals of establishing a self-sufficient eye care system in the region by deploying teachers to identify school children with impaired vision and referring them to one of our ophthalmic assistants in the region. This will lead to a reduction in the number of visually impaired children and improves the school performance of children whose vision has been corrected. We will also continue working on reducing the number of people suffering from blindness due to cataracts and improve the socio-economic situation of that same target group. This will create an opportunity for eye care training that provides employment to both men and women and that in return will boost local hospitals and schools.

During the first 3 months of the lockdown in Kenya, 152,000 Kenyan teenage girls became pregnant — a 40% increase in the country monthly average. These numbers, from early July, are some of the earliest pieces of evidence linking the COVID-19 pandemic to unintended pregnancies. It is alarming that so many teenage girls have fallen pregnant during lockdown, which can have lifelong consequences for them. Teenagers who give birth often face higher rates of poverty and domestic violence later in life due to misogynistic cultural norms and threadbare social safety nets. This is, among other things, the poignant consequence of female-unfriendly cultural norms and values, worn-out social safety nets and, above all, a lack of information and care. In addition, all the teenage girls who become pregnant during the lockdown are now unable to fall back on basic prenatal care, which can provide them with the physical and emotional support and guidance they need especially now so badly.

Our goal is to ensure that basic prenatal health care for the increased number of pregnant girls and women can safely be resumed, to reduce mortality among teenage mothers and newborn babies.



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We are very grateful for your support over the past year and we hope you can support us again in achieving our goals.

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

