

100 Wells Drilled in Samburu County

By Linda Hooper

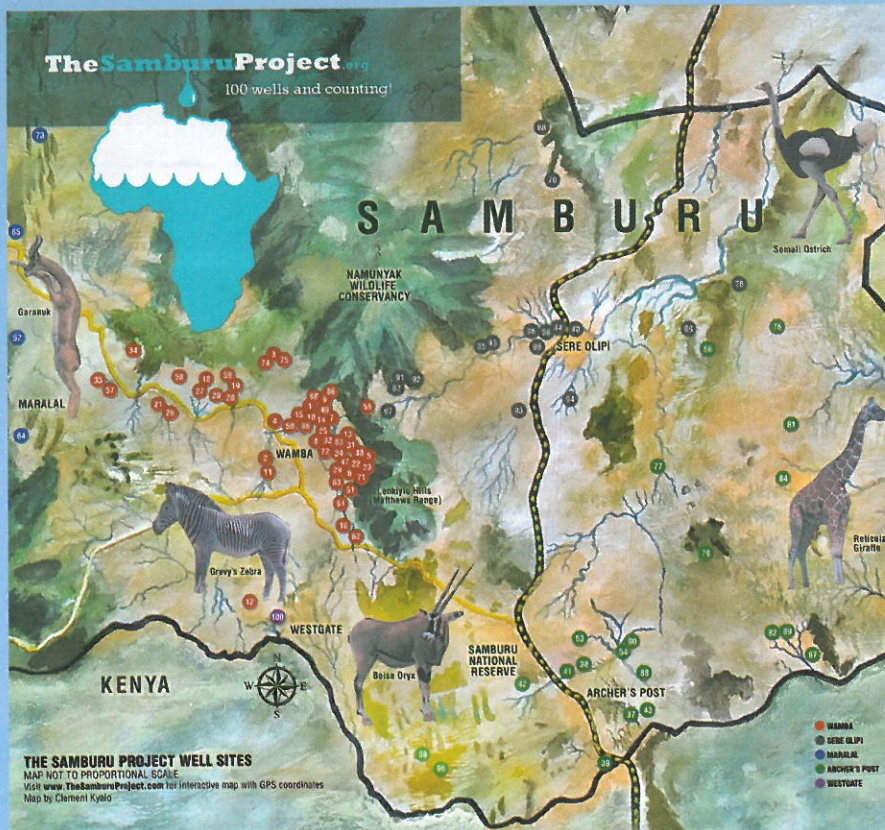
Drilling 100 Wells in Samburu was cause for a big celebration in Samburu. Women's groups from the area donned their best beads to sing songs of gratitude to The Samburu Project in the organization's home town of Wamba. 300 people from the local community and The Samburu Project - TSP supporters from Nairobi, the United States and Europe attended the celebration. Over the past 13 years, The Samburu Project has collaborated

with 100 community groups and schools to drill wells in Wamba, Sere Olipi, Archer's Post and Maralal. These wells are estimated to have provided access to clean water to 100,000 people in Samburu East and Central. No longer do women and girls need to walk hours a day searching for water from any available open source— water that is often contaminated with diseases, resulting in the number-one killer of children under the age of five — diarrhea.

By contrast, because of clean water, illness due to water-borne diseases in The Samburu Project well communities has been drastically reduced. Education for girls has tripled, food security and diversity through gardening initiatives has increased, and women now have time to be creative and productive since they no longer need to walk great distances for water. The Samburu Project's 100 Wells Celebration began with Wamba Chief and Master of Ceremonies, Mr.



TSP Donors and Board Members arriving in Samburu via Airkenya at Kalama Airstrip



100 wells map



Members from the Loruko women's Group and Lopesio Women's Group, sing songs of gratitude to The Samburu Project team

Salim Lsachore welcoming guests from Samburu county, Nairobi, the United States and Europe. Village elders told stories remembering Ruth "Mama" Musa who had the vision for the project and her sons Mussa and Lucas Lekwale who were instrumental in the early days of the project.

Dressed in their finest traditional beads, women's groups from Loruko and Lopesio sang traditional Samburu songs of gratitude to the donors, board members and TSP staff in attendance. Chief Joy Lenaa of Waso, Christine Namunyak prominent community leader, Ambrose Lekoitip, head teacher from Sere-Olipi Primary School, and Samburu area MP, Jackson Lekumontare gave inspired speeches and expressed gratitude to TSP and their donors for the generous support and gift of clean water. Songs and poems were performed by students from Ntepes School in Wamba and Sere Olipi Primary School in Sere Olipi.

Beyond celebrating The Samburu Project's 100th well, the theme of the day was connection. TSP strives to build a global community through donors, volunteers and supporters and the Samburu people. TSP was founded on a strong belief in community engagement as a catalyst for positive change. The turnout by locals and foreigners illustrated the power of that shared belief.

Supporters from the United States and Europe visited the 100th well at Lchoro in the Westgate area of Samburu. The Lchoro community sang traditional songs of gratitude to the donors and expressed how much the clean water means to their village and families. Festivities throughout the weekend included visits to various wells and schools in Wamba, Archer's Post and Sere Olipi.

The power of this journey took hold as we began on a small plane traveling to Samburu. When flying over the mountains north of Nairobi, the landscape changes dramatically from lush green fields to a red dry clay like earth with bristly trees and muddy rivers. Immediately it becomes apparent of the dry, unforgiving conditions the Samburu people endure. With Executive Director, Linda Hooper and Project Manager Eric Lekolii as our guides, my daughter and I spent the next few days being introduced to life in Samburu. We had the privilege of visiting the several of the TSP well villages and a school. Most importantly, we met the incredible people of Samburu. It was a moving experience to visit wells for which our TSP donors and communities here in America have worked so hard to raise money for. I did not realize this experience would have such a powerful impact on me.

To see these wells first hand was truly beautiful. To see the local villagers lining up with their friends, their children their community, all patiently waiting with their big yellow jerry can - an experience I will never forget. The people rely so greatly on what we have done for them. Their lives literally revolve around these wells, of course out of survival but also as a social gathering place. Everyone chats, their children play while they spend time together, as they patiently wait their turn for water. I was also touched by their gratitude. They knew who we were and why we had come to see the wells, it was incredibly powerful to meet these people and understand how we are changing their lives by providing the most basic human necessity - clean water.

--Doretta Bonner,
TSP Board Member



TSP 100 Wells Celebration Event



Lchoro, the 100th Well, visited by Board Member, Doug Smith and TSP donors from California with Westgate community members

The Samburu Project was founded on the promise of delivering access to clean water. Along the way, we discovered that water does so much more than we imagined. With clean water, families grow their own food, girls go to school, and women empower themselves through

small businesses. Water helps communities grow, learn and thrive. The Samburu Project is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Los Angeles, California and an NGO in Kenya. You can learn more about the work of The Samburu Project at www.thesamburuproject.org.

AirKenya is a proud sponsor of The Samburu Project.

For additional information and photographs please contact Executive Director Linda Hooper (Linda@thesamburuproject.org) or TSP Project Manager, Eric Lekolii (Eric@thesamburuproject.org).