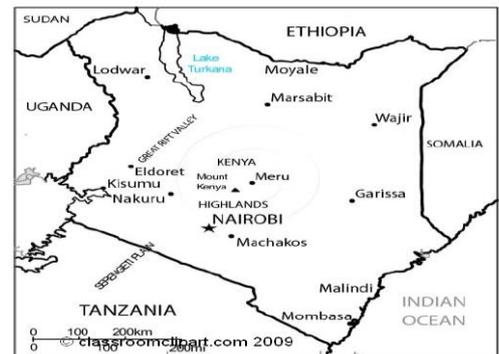


## MERU WOMEN’S GARDEN PROJECT

**Meru Women’s Garden Project will support some of the poorest women-led households in Kenya.** The project 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.



### WHAT are the aims of the project?

**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

### WHY support this project?

The Meru Women’s Garden Project will operate in one of the poorest parts of Kenya.

**Meru District** is in Tigania East with a population of 136,000. 90% live in rural areas with HIV/AIDs prevalent in the region.

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



## HOW will the money 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.

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.

The attendance of girls at secondary school will be targeted via breakfast clubs and food gardens. By year 3 these will have a huge impact on:

- school dropout rates
- low achievement of girls in literacy & numeracy
- education surrounding Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)



## WHO will lead and manage the 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.

### MERU WOMEN'S GARDEN PROJECT

#### THE LEGACY

The legacy of this project cannot be overestimated:

- women will be valued for recognising and reducing the plight of others who live in poverty
- women and girls will have a greater chance of survival, safety and status in their community
- the number of beneficiaries will continue to grow through the cascade system of passing on knowledge and understanding
- women will become role models for others without conventional academic skills
- improved access to education for girls will enhance their prospects for the future
- the project is sustainable and easily replicable
- more women and girls will live above the poverty line with improved life chances, and be able to care for their dependants more effectively
- CIFORD will be able to direct their resources to reducing school dropout rates and the abuse of girls through sexual exploitation and FGM

**The Meru Women's Garden Project** will highlight the stature of SIGBI and will truly '**Deliver the Difference**'. It will transform lives whilst supporting SIGBI's Programme Focus Goals and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals particularly ending poverty and achieving food security and gender equality.

**PLEASE SUPPORT THIS PROJECT**

[www.sigbi.org/canterbury](http://www.sigbi.org/canterbury)

[www.child.org](http://www.child.org)