



## PROJECT SUMMARY

### Samburu Drought Relief Programme

#### Background:

The Samburu district suffered a severe drought in 1999 after two years of rain failure. The inhabitants have no cash economy and are dependent primarily on livestock. The area is extremely remote, with only 7 people per km<sup>2</sup>. Many people live two days walk from health facilities and a poor infrastructure makes the delivering of food relief very troublesome. A combination of drought and widespread cattle rustling made a large number of people destitute. Malnutrition rates were as high as 50% with children under five and elderly most afflicted.



*Malnourished Samburu Children*



#### Samburu Facts

Population	144,000
Tribe	Samburu
Household Size	4.4
Geographic Area	21,000km <sup>2</sup>
People per km <sup>2</sup>	7
HIV/AIDS prevalence	5%
Average Annual Income	US\$ 270
% in Paid Employment	12%
% Below poverty line	39%
Infant mortality	7.6%
Primary source of income	Livestock

*Source: Regional Government Statistics, AIDS in Kenya 2001  
Note: HIV prevalence is of pop aged 10+. % in paid employment is % of economically active population*

#### ICROSS Role:

ICROSS (having a track record of health and livestock projects in Samburu that dates back to 1983) was approached by the Samburu community to provide support. ICROSS secured funding of Ksh5.1 million (US\$75,000) from the Irish Government (DCI) to fund interventions in five locations (Sawan, Seketet, Lork, Maria Mfarji Home for AIDS orphans, TB Manyatta). The project commenced in March 2000 and was completed in March 2001.

#### The project:

The project consisted of two modules

- Food distribution: Between March 2000 and March 2001 ICROSS undertook four distributions of food of a total value of Ksh3.2 million. In total 8.5 tonnes of Unimix enriched with soya, 2560 litres of cooking oil and 14 tonnes of high protein biscuits were distributed through local community centres chosen to reach the semi-nomadic population.
- Medical distribution: During the same period ICROSS purchased drugs to a total value of Ksh1.8 million from the Mission of Essential Drugs and Supplies (MEDS) and these were packed and distributed through the missions and hospitals according to the needs of each area.

Throughout the project, ICROSS worked closely with the Provincial Commissioner, District Commissioner and District Officers as well as the Ministry of Health and local NGOs (such as the Sisters of Charity, the Catholic Mission and the District Drought Monitoring Unit) to ensure effectiveness. The lack of road infrastructure made distribution highly difficult and some areas could not be reached due to the lack of four-wheel pick up trucks.

### Monitoring & Evaluation:

In parallel with the relief operation ICROSS undertook detailed research of the impacts of the drought on mother and child health and the impact of the different types of relief diet.

- In December 2000 a survey of mothers and children was undertaken to assess the state of health. The survey showed that 73% of mothers were below weight, 49% were anaemic, 25% had diarrhoea and a significant portion were suffering from diseases such as trachoma, scabies, malaria and sexually transmitted infections. In children up to ten, 25% were moderately malnourished, 18% severely malnourished, 61% were suffering from diarrhoea and there were high incidence of dehydration, intestinal worms, trachoma and scabies. A survey of livestock and water sources undertaken at the same time showed that herd sizes had been reduced to 12% of pre-drought levels while a high proportion of water holes were contaminated.
- Analysis of response to treatment. This analysis of 126 patients looked at the impact of high protein and low protein diets. The results of this survey showed that in severely malnourished adults, a lower protein diet is more effective at aiding recovery and relief strategies need to be designed accordingly.



### Impact:

The distribution helped to reduce malnutrition in areas covered with consequent reduction in problems such as diarrhoea and intestinal worms. While the worst of the drought is now over, the programme enabled the linking of various communities and has helped to increase community awareness about the need to mobilise and respond to the early warning signs of drought.