



OL MALO TRUST

WATER . MEDICINE . ART . EDUCATION . CULTURE . WILDLIFE . ENVIRONMENT

Committed to the survival and protection of Samburuland and its nomadic people

Between 1999 and 2001 Kenya was struck by the worst drought in living memory. Whole regions of the country were devastated by the disaster, but none more so than the dry, desert wilderness of Samburuland in the north. The nomadic Samburu inhabitants lost 80 per cent of their cattle during the drought, and with it the people's primary source of livelihood and pride.

During a time like this the entire tribe suffers, but women and children suffer the most. The men move with their cattle to try and find grazing, and the women and children remain behind in their homesteads. A mother will sometimes be left with up to 20 children to look after, with little food, water or medical resources. All progressively become malnourished and sick.

The Ol Malo Trust was established during this drought. It aims to improve the living standards of the Samburu, but only at the invitation of the people and with the full involvement of the people. The Trust is contributing to the preservation of the Samburu people in terms of qualities and health in such a way that the Samburus are independent, strong and empowered to live their lives in the way that they strongly desire and choose.

The ***L'chekuti Children's Painting Programme*** was one of the Trust's first projects, aimed at helping the children affected by the drought, and it has since become the corner stone and the foundation of Ol Malo's work with the Samburu.

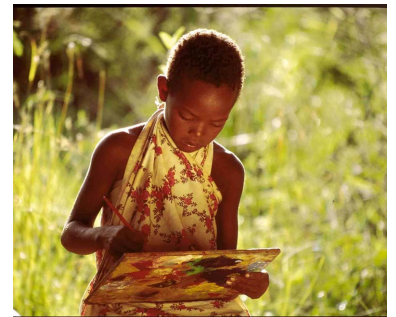
In the Samburu language, 'L'chekuti' means '***young boys and girls who take care of livestock in the pasture fields***'. When they are not attending school or taking care of the livestock, Ol Malo encourages all children in the area aged between 4 and 10 years to come to the Sampiripiri Arts Workshop at the Ol Malo Eco-Lodge, where they can paint and have fun. Julia Francombe, the founder of the Trust, hit upon this wonderful idea as a way to both raise money for the Trust and to give the children pride in themselves.

Initially the children were too shy even to touch - and actually too lethargic from lack of food to hold - the paintbrushes. They had never been exposed to anything like this before, and in the context of their remote lifestyle the idea of painting images on paper was a huge novelty. Gradually, however, they have gained strength and curiosity, and become familiar with the materials. Left to their own devices the resulting original art-works are an astonishing portrayal of life in the bush through the eyes of Samburu children.

The paintings are sold to the tourists who visit the Ol Malo eco-lodge, and exported to overseas buyers, with the money earned being used to buy food, medicine and more painting materials for the children. During times of the drought they also go home to their manyattas with cooking oil, sugar, tea, corn meal and flour for their families, which keeps them alive during the worst months of the drought. More importantly, they go home with hope and pride.

For more information about the Ol Malo Trust and the L'chekuti Children's Painting Project, please contact us on: E.mail: info@olmalodesigns.com.

Websites: www.olmaloeypoint.com; www.cafonline.org; www.olmalodesigns.org (under construction)



"What we have noticed over the years is that these children, who live in such a dry, brown landscape, love to paint with the cleanest, brightest primary colours."
Julia Francombe, Founder of the Ol Malo Trust

