

### **BACKGROUND**

The Kisima Kia Mukuu (Fig Tree Spring) Water Project is a good example of how a relatively modest grant from Tusk for a rural development project has had a huge impact for the local communities. The spring forms a strategic water source for a Meru community in the Kithima district of northern Kenya. The area is arid, savannah grassland, which receives very little annual rainfall. The Mukuu spring is therefore essential for the survival of both the people and livestock in the Kithima area.

The community of 3,000 people from nine villages has for many years relied on the spring for its domestic consumption purposes as well as for livestock. For many years the spring was not managed and there was no organised use of the water. Cattle were watered, clothes were washed, people bathed and drank, all from the same source. Consequently the water became badly polluted and water borne diseases seriously affected the Mukuu community as well as neighbouring communities down stream. In addition the source of the spring was badly eroded and denuded of vegetation, which reduced the water supply still further.

With Tusk's support, very simple, energy efficient, technology has been installed to provide a solution to all of these problems. A concrete weir was constructed downstream from the eye of the spring and an environmentally friendly water-wheel pump installed. Powered by the wheel, an underground delivery pipe channels water from the source to a 35m<sup>3</sup> holding tank, which in turn feeds a cattle trough, sheep/goat trough, clothes washing sinks and an ablution block. Most of the water is diverted down stream to maintain the flow and provide a lifeline to other communities.



### **BEFORE the project it was evident that:**

- There was livestock damage to the eye of the spring and outlets by constant trampling
- People used the immediate bushes as toilets which resulted in serious water pollution following rains
- Defecation by donkeys, cattle, sheep and goats directly in the water increased the levels of water pollution
- The stream and banks were eroded due to overgrazing of the surrounding vegetation
- There was regular conflict between the communities regarding use of the water and priority for watering cattle
- Water borne diseases were being transmitted downstream, affecting other communities

### **AFTER the completion the following immediate benefits were realised:**

- No contact with the eye of the spring
- Livestock had managed watering points
- There was a clean water supply and basins for washing clothes
- Showers and toilets were situated well away from the water source
- Provision of a stand pipe with taps for users fetching water
- Instruction was given to the community in the importance of soil conservation, tree planting and water catchment area protection
- Reduced conflict between community members with a regulated system that gives access to the water supplies for all community members and their livestock

