



Founder's Message



Christmas 2024

The support Kids for Kids has had during these recent months in Sudan has proved that Sudan is not entirely forgotten, at least by those of us who care about innocent children caught up in the violence. Although the world has known about the appalling atrocities that started 20 months ago, it is only now that a major journalist has been able to go and to report first hand. Many of you will have seen Lyse Doucet's reports on the BBC from Sudan and Chad and been shocked, as she was, at the vast numbers of women and children who have fled their homes, and have no trace of their husbands, brothers, uncles or children.

Darfur has been in the grip of violence and it is where the worst of the atrocities continue to be committed, and it is where the indirect effects of violence are almost worse – disease and starvation. Hunger in this century

This has been the worst 20 months I can remember since I started Kids for Kids 24 years ago. When my son Alastair and I went to Darfur what we found so shocked me then that I have been doing all I can, ever since, to help as many children as possible to a better future. I did not know how much we would be needed - and never more than now.

We first went to Darfur in March 2001. It was already drought. Many of you will remember how we came across a lonely 9 year old boy in the middle of the desert, under a scorching sun. Ibrahim was walking SEVEN hours to reach a handpump, and then he had to struggle back with the heavy jerrycan to bring water to his younger brothers and sister. It still shocks me to think of it, because many children still do that walk for water today.

No organisation in all these years has even begun to extend their help to these remote communities. There are countless villages like that first village where little Ibrahim lived. His valuable water was also keeping three precious possessions alive – three little goats whose milk was the children's only source of protein. It was obvious we had to help, first water, then goats. That is why we are called Kids for Kids of course!

Since meeting that little boy, our sustainable projects have been transforming the lives of over half a million people. Those living in one of the most inaccessible regions of the world have benefited from the range of our integrated projects – handpumps, veterinary care, midwives, mosquito nets, blankets, farm tools, and much more. Their children are going to the kindergartens we have built, including Ibrahim's own children. The key project is our goat loans so the children have milk, and their mothers can generate an income. Everything is based on training the communities to run the projects themselves. I don't believe in charity – I believe in enabling people to help themselves – enabling them to remain in their own homes. That has never been more important than now.

www.kidsforkids.org.uk

contact@kidsforkids.org.uk

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To date there are 110 Kids for Kids villages across North Darfur. In the midst of the appalling violence that has destroyed so many people's homes, our villages are growing because of what they offer. Only this week I have signed off a project to help 35 more families who have sought refuge in Ibrahim's village. They arrived traumatised and with nothing. Ibrahim's best friend is organising volunteers to make the deliveries, and making sure we get photographs and receipts so that we can prove that our help is not going astray. With failed harvests, schools shut, soaring inflation and the terrifying violence, people are facing starvation. And, as always, it is the smallest who succumb first. Over 5 ½ million children under 5 are acutely malnourished. That is an horrific statistic. How *can* the world stand idly by?

I am immensely proud that we have found a way to get assistance to Darfur. The vast camps of displaced people, and the bigger towns, will be the first to receive aid – yet even the UN is not reaching them yet. It is nothing short of miraculous that we are actively helping. At times I doubted that it would be possible. The violence has been far far worse than anything we have experienced over the years. Both sets of armed forces, the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Force, the latter, the notorious Janjaweed, are being armed by other countries, resulting in the fighting developing on a scale of atrocities unheard of before. Why are other Governments not intervening, despite knowing which countries are providing arms, so that neither side will even agree to a ceasefire? Both sides prevent aid reaching besieged civilians. Women and children continue to face the brunt of the violence. The survivors will be scarred for years.

Despite their worries for their own families, our amazing volunteers in Darfur, who have helped us for so long, are taking urgently needed aid to families no one else is thinking about. Families determined to stay in their villages, in their homes.

With the banks closed, it took us some time to find an alternative way to get funds through to families in rural areas. Since August, thanks to a wonderful organisation in Washington D C, we have been able to make digital mobile transfers so our funds are getting through to our Steering Committee.

To date 4,000 families with children aged five and under have received seeds to eat *and* to plant for crops - we must think of the coming months, not just of immediate needs. At the moment a sack of seed costs £15. We are also asking for help to enable us to provide our **Kitchen Kits for families with small children.** Kits cost £25 each and include pulses, lentils, ground nuts and even fresh produce for children who have been deprived of protein for months. There are so many families who need our help. Your help will enable us to reach many more. They really need you, need us, right now. Earlier this month I agreed a project to provide a further 26 villages with food for their smallest children – so 6,446 children will at last have something to eat. It will reach them before Christmas. So far we have helped 24,000 people.

This is the time to help – we are showing it *can* be done.

If *you* lived in Darfur what would you prioritise as urgent for you and your family? Is it a goat, a sack of seed, or maybe a mosquito net, the handpump to be repaired, medicines, veterinary drugs? What would *you* need? You can order on our website online, and send us details for personalised **Christmas Certificates** to your friends and family. Please spread the word to anyone you know and encourage them to help. We want this to be the best Kids for Kids' Christmas ever!

Miracles do happen – you are helping us to transform the lives of children and families in Darfur.
Happy Christmas everyone.



Patricia Parker OBE

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