

The Pope, a Prince, The Prime Minister and Film Stars adopt a village in Darfur!



Not everyone has forgotten Darfur! There are some very famous people who have shown they care! Out of sight a miracle is happening! In a village adopted by a small British charity, some of the most deprived children in the world are no longer facing malnutrition and a bleak future, thanks to 89 of the most famous people in the world, including The Prince of Wales, The Pope, The Prime Minister, actors, artists and politicians. All have donated pictures which they had drawn themselves and which were sold for over £53,000! Mugabil, a small village of 1,654 people in the middle of North Darfur has been adopted as the 60th Kids for Kids' village, thanks to pictures of goats and donkeys!

Mugabil has just 256 families who live in huts built from the stalks of millet. The wind howls through the walls and water is only available from a small hafir in the winter months. There are no handpumps. In the summer people walk miles to reach water. There is no school, medical help, veterinary care, latrines and most people do not own even a blanket. There is no electricity, no mobile phone coverage. The nearest school is 5 miles away. It is 45 miles to El Fasher and there is no road. It would be difficult to imagine poorer people. But all this is about to change!

For 10 years Kids for Kids has been showing that there is a way to bring lasting changes by helping people to help themselves. Patricia Parker MBE, who started the charity in 2001, because of a little 9 year olds 7 hour walk for water, says "People in Darfur are not asking for charity. They are asking for sustainable help to give their children a start in life. We are showing that you can make a difference even in one of the most inaccessible regions of the world. Celebrities are saying the world must not be allowed to turn a blind eye to these deprived children. We will now be able to train the villagers to run our projects, to make sure the goat loans work and benefit the whole community. We will train paravets and provide veterinary drugs, two volunteers start their training as village midwives next week. We will train first aid workers and teach improved farming techniques and animal husbandry. We will fund a community forest next to a new kindergarten and, most important of all, we will do all we can to dig handpumps to provide clean water. Not only will this basic grass roots help give people the chance of a real livelihood, they will transform the prospects of the entire community. Conditions in the villages of Darfur continue to deteriorate. Violence is unreported and aid workers are at risk of kidnap. Yet the children of Darfur are the most deprived in the world. They need our help. The region is struggling with unimaginable - and inexcusable - poverty. During my recent visit I saw children whose hair had turned preternaturally blonde because of prolonged malnutrition and adults had missing teeth because their gums have loosened."

Kids for Kids is one of the most effective organisations in Darfur, with an impressive record of bringing real change to the lives of countless children. "For ten years we have been teaching people how to help themselves" says Patricia. "But during my recent visit I was shocked to find that families cannot afford protein in any form. Inflation is rocketing. A kilo of lamb costs over £7.00. According to the radio station Radio Dabanga (5th January 2012) a 2 kilo box of onions is now £96! With incomes for the poorest dropping to under £50 a year for a family, it would be difficult to find poorer people. The Kids for Kids' Programme is unique because we listen to the people and provide what they say will make the biggest difference, and people run the projects themselves. Most importantly, we are able to be flexible. Because our funds come mainly from individuals, we are able to act fast and effectively when there is a problem. It is not just families' lives that are changed, it is whole communities."

contd

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WE DON'T BELIEVE IN CHARITY WE BELIEVE IN HELPING PEOPLE TO HELP THEMSELVES

DARFUR 2012:

The Foreign Office continues to advise against all travel to Darfur. In the absence of the big aid agencies and their publicity machines there are no reports of current conditions. In the villages beyond the camps, children sleep on the sand, in a bare hut made from the stalks of the staple crop, millet. Every single person, not just the children, faces prolonged malnutrition in the wake of severe drought in 2010/2011. The failure of the crops also jeopardises the huts and fences. When the crops fail you cannot repair your hut. Many children have nothing to sleep under and succumb to chest infections, a major risk when they are malnourished. Blankets are so costly they are considered a status symbol which few can afford. During daylight hours toddlers are tied to the hut to stop them wandering into the scorching sun, whilst their mothers walk many hours to reach water. There are few kindergartens. Illiteracy is high. People toil in the stony ground to grow crops which fail through lack of water or pest infestation. The largest aquifer in Africa lies under Darfur, but villagers cannot afford to dig for water. Even basic health care is beyond reach in the villages. The simplest wound, untreated, maims for life. There are no roads. Transport is a donkey. Animals are crucial for survival, but there is no veterinary care in the villages, and few can afford to buy a goat. No one reports these conditions because no one goes to the villages to see for themselves. Inflation is soaring - officially 21% in August 2011 - in Darfur it is even higher because of its isolation and instability.

Key to the Kids for Kids' projects is the Goat Loan which helps not just successive families, but whole communities. We lend 6 goats to a family for 2 years, then 6 are passed to another family. We teach people to look after their animals, and we provide veterinary care. We give mothers donkeys to collect water, to pull ploughs and carts. Stronger donkeys pull our donkey ambulances and watercarts. There is no healthcare in villages. Our midwives and first aid workers are saving lives every single day. There are already 68 Kids for Kids midwives, trained in our own school in El Fasher. We are funding the training of 40 more this year. People travel miles to seek their help. The health of the animals is inextricably linked to the health of the children. Our paravets run a revolving veterinary drug scheme in each village. Children sleep under a mosquito net and a blanket each night. They will not die of malaria (still the biggest killer in Africa) or suffer so many chest infections. They will not be malnourished, like every other child in the villages of Darfur, thanks to goats' milk - and they will wake each morning with the chance of a better future. Green belts of young healthy drought-resistant trees make a lasting difference to the environment. Most important of all, there is a handpump nearby. Water that used to take hours to reach, and to carry back home on the back of a donkey, or on your head. Because they are not walking for water, the children go to school every day.



A young goat and jerry cans wait for water at the latest Kids for Kids handpump



Blonde hair is a sign of prolonged malnutrition

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Patricia Parker MBE, CEO and Founder - **Kids for Kids**

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