

**Tell us a little bit about the charity...**

We have a very simple programme. We adopt whole villages in Darfur, and get the locals to select their poorest 15 per cent of families; we then provide these families with a loan of six goats for two years. Not only do these goats supply milk to give direct help to children, but over time they provide an income for mothers too, as they can sell their produce and offspring. We also provide packages with very basic things like mosquito nets and farm tools, as well as blankets that significantly improve children's health during the cold winter months. Together, these essentials can do far more than just one water pump, for example.

**What's the most important thing that's been achieved so far?**

Improving children's health as a whole is definitely the most important thing, and helping to empower their mothers through providing them with an income has also been crucial. We train about 40 midwives every 18 to 20 months, which has hugely helped to improve childbirth conditions. We've just done a survey with 16 of them, and between just those few they have delivered 4,662 healthy babies! What is also really fabulous is that not one of these mothers died during childbirth.

**Describe your volunteers to us...**

Kids for Kids simply couldn't exist without our volunteers. I have the most wonderful committee in Surrey, but we really do need to expand. We are actually currently advertising for a new assistant. We also have other people across the country who help us, such as an 82-year-old man who is about to cycle across Normandy to raise money for the charity. We only employ two people in Darfur, with the rest of our work there relying on volunteers. We have a team of eight village leaders, and then in each village we have committees such as the Animal Loan Committee and the Children's Shepherds Committee, which is fantastic.

# Charitable life

Kids for Kids founder and Dorking resident **Patricia Parker** tells us why goats are an unlikely solution to lifting poverty in Darfur

WRITER: Ellie Fells



Alastair King-Smith

Patricia Parker from Kids for Kids

**If readers were to give £10, how might that be spent?**

Actually what's so nice about our charity is that they can decide! We can provide whatever people choose to donate, but £10 could definitely go towards new jerry cans, which we really do need. The absolute basic essential is water, and you need to carry it in something when you're collecting it, but often people can't afford this. I recently spoke to a woman called Hanima who has to share

her neighbour's jerry can, which means that whenever she collects water, she has to give half back to them.

**What can they do if they'd like to get involved themselves?**

It's not just about fundraising, it's about raising awareness, and that's what would really help us. We need word of mouth, people telling others about us and the work that we do. What we do tend to say though is to hold the smallest coffee morning ever! A goat costs £40, so if you invite just seven friends and each of you donate £5, you would be giving a family a goat, which will help a child for two years, and then its baby will help another child and so on. It's incredibly cost effective.

**How important is philanthropy?**

I think there are certain things that we should be doing as people rather than leaving it to the government, even in this country. But the generosity of the British public is exceptional – I get terribly moved by how much people do for us.

**'The generosity of the British public is exceptional – I get terribly moved by how much people do'**

**What do you enjoy most about being based in Surrey?**

The charity is based at my house, and I live in Dorking. I love it – I am just so privileged to be here. You need to help other people if you're very lucky like this.

**What do you hope to achieve in the future?**

This year we were able to adopt five villages, which I am really pleased about, but we had to choose small villages because I knew that for the first time we would have to provide emergency food and seeds for planting because of the drought. I am praying that next year, we will have planted enough seeds for people to be able to feed their children. I would love to adopt more, bigger villages too – this sounds like a big ambition, but our motto is 'one goat at a time!' ♦

*For details of fundraising events and more, visit [kidsforkids.org.uk](http://kidsforkids.org.uk)*