

Urgent help needed now – to prevent a disaster



Urgent: Starvation is a real risk for Children in Darfur this Summer.

The year has started with the appalling news that there is famine in Darfur – already. Summer has barely started, yet temperatures are soaring. Children and animals are likely to die if we do nothing. Famine Disaster Relief reported as long ago as October last year that areas of Darfur were in crisis even then – but not one country or organisation answered the call. Failed harvest, for the second year running, has left people with virtually nothing to enable them to survive the coming months. Children and animals are at great risk. The young succumb first. Combined with soaring inflation and the drastic devaluation of the Sudanese pound to a third of its value, the loss of their subsistence crop puts everyone at risk. Every village is asking for help. Starvation is a real and frightening spectre for the coming months. The Government of Sudan does not normally ask for help, but the Governor of North Darfur himself called for urgent assistance at a public meeting. This is an indication of just how serious the situation is.

Although our aim is always to provide sustainable help so that we are helping create a better future for children, we cannot stand by and do nothing when there is such an emergency. We are therefore launching an appeal that will enable us to provide seed and fodder right now. Seed for the families for food, and hopefully sufficient for them to be able to save enough to plant in July when the rains come, and fodder because the health of the animals is closely linked to the health of the children. One of the problems is making sure families have enough stored food to keep their animals alive throughout the summer, until the rains come. When the harvest fails, the grass is also sparse and it is this which they save and turn into hay. I have already asked for a report of which villages are likely to be hit the hardest. The list is long.

We need to provide seed for the families and fodder for the animals right now.

This will be in addition to providing sustainable help through our programme of integrated grass roots projects. We had already committed to adopting six new villages this year, bringing the total of Kids for Kids' villages to 93, and would never let those in need down. Our long experience has shown that enabling people to help themselves, especially to help them diversify from sole reliance on the subsistence crop, gives them the resilience to withstand disasters. But even in our villages people are worried. Those with no animals have little chance without help. Owning a small flock of goats, if you can keep them healthy, means children have milk each day – a miracle when there is nothing growing left to eat.

Please help now by making a donation. www.kidsforkids.org.uk

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