



FOUNDER'S MESSAGE

In a year of crisis where do you start?

Dear Friend,

All of us are facing many personal challenges, wherever we are: isolation from family and friends, loss of jobs and financial uncertainty, concern for the health of our loved ones. The months ahead are likely to see us all struggle even more from the consequences of COVID-19. Charity begins at home – of course. Our families, our neighbours, our compatriots need us.

But where does this leave those in remote villages in Darfur? Even without COVID-19, conditions there are so far below even the most basic of living standards that it is hard to imagine how people survive. The support we provide, thanks to you, makes a difference way beyond the obvious simple help of each project and, above all, it gives hope to peoples who have received no help from anyone, ever. Sudan has declared a state of emergency. Inflation in July was 143%, in August 167%. Now it is even higher. Imagine what that means – bread and water each month cost two and a half times the month before. How can ordinary families cope?

Sudan is destitute. Corruption under the previous regime was at every level, with no investment for years in infrastructure. Sanctions are preventing international investment. Without economic support, the hope that at last justice, peace and prosperity could return to Sudan, after the overthrow of the 30 year rule of Omar Bashir, is being dashed. Despite the Sudanese people's model peaceful protests, and the transitional government doing all it can to press for an end to the internal conflicts, and to introduce laws to benefit all, including secularisation, the outlawing of FGM and the banning of corrupt businesses, there can be no alleviation of poverty without our help.

So what has KIDS FOR KIDS been doing? When my son Alastair and I were at last able to visit Darfur in February this year after a 9 year forced absence, we were able to agree how to extend our projects to more families. We were concerned that starvation would be a real threat for many children before the next harvest. Then COVID-19 spread across the world, and even in remote villages the virus started to appear. We ourselves know how unreliable Test and Trace is in the UK. In Darfur it does not exist. There is some testing in South Darfur and in the capital Khartoum, but with an almost total lack of medics beyond the few inadequate hospitals in the regions: any figure of coronavirus cases is unreliable. 'A mystery disease' is what it has been called. Villagers have access to so little healthcare that they are unlikely to get diagnosed, and if they do catch COVID-19 badly, it is almost certain to be fatal. We will never know how many people die from coronavirus in Sudan. In addition to continuing our programme of sustainable help, we launched a massive Soap Appeal.

I cannot begin to express my gratitude to you all for your support. It is ongoing. It has to be, whilst COVID-19 is still a threat. People are struggling to feed their families. They cannot contemplate buying even one bar of soap. So we are continuing to deliver soap to those who need it. I am so proud that so many of our villages, thanks to you, are able to wash their hands. Please do support our appeal on our website.

People ask if there is water to wash with. People cannot survive without water. During the sweltering heat of summer, they have been walking mile upon mile to reach handpumps. Just as we ensure we are washing our hands more regularly, imagine the extra effort families in Darfur are making to bring water to keep their children safe. At the moment, there is water – too much: floods have overwhelmed many areas of North Darfur, drowning humans and animals, destroying homes and crops. Mosquitoes are breeding in frightening numbers. I have never needed so many mosquito nets.

To donate nets: <https://www.kidsforkids.org.uk/mosquitonets> To donate water: www.kidsforkids.org.uk/water

I am so proud of our team in Darfur. Whatever the difficulty, they manage to find ways to continue to provide assistance. The amazing voluntary efforts of the communities themselves is a crucial ingredient of our success. We are not an emergency organisation. Our aim is to provide long-term, sustainable improvements to children's lives, to give them a chance of a better future. I have a horror of promising support and failing to provide it. How then to budget when inflation is soaring and unpredictable?

Thankfully many of you donate to 'The Greatest Need'. www.kidsforkids.org.uk/Greatest-Need

This enables us to create a bulwark of reserves to mitigate the uncertainties of life in Darfur, and indeed to ensure projects can continue whatever happens. Your generosity has helped us to act quickly.

Because of the increased need we have taken the decision to continue with our policy of adopting more villages this year. We will provide more handpumps, goats and donkeys, mosquito nets, blankets and farm tools – and much more - a package devised to lift families out of abject poverty. This help has never been needed more. We will sadly not commit to building even one kindergarten or health centre this year, until the current emergency is over. The immediate health of the children must be the first, urgent, priority. It is impossible to predict with accuracy what all of this is going to cost. If we must, we will spend more of our reserves, but this will leave us vulnerable for the future.

How can you help? I need to ask you to be as generous as you can, without jeopardising your own finances please, so that we can help as many families as possible to feed their children and prevent them from starving. **Please spread the word of what we are doing**, share this update or post something on social media. Perhaps do a sponsored run or walk? Invite a friend to coffee and sponsor a goat, or mosquito net? I will make sure to post news of conditions on our website and social media but please do get in touch at any time if you would like an update. If you have suggestions of schools, churches or other organisations who might like to support us, please make an introduction. There can be no peoples in the world suffering as much as the families in Darfur. Anything we can each do will make a great difference. You can even support us without it costing you a penny – by signing up to Amazon Smile!

I am praying that sanctions will be lifted, that the international community will reach out a helping hand to a country that has the prospect of long-lasting peace, and, with our help, that people will have democracy and prosperity at last.



Patricia Parker MBE
Founder