

KIDS FOR KIDS – NEEDED MORE THAN EVER?



Dear Friends,

The news from Sudan has never been more worrying. The hope for democracy has faded in the wake of the military coup last year, but people are resilient. When I first went to Sudan what struck me was their humanity and their care for each other. During that first visit my son Alastair and I made to Um Ga'al, the village that became the first Kids for Kids' village, I asked if there would be jealousy if we supported the poorest families, providing them with five goats, a donkey, and other basic essentials – things that people could only dream of in the extreme poverty in which they lived? The village leaders said "if you support the poorest, you will help us too, by taking the burden of helping them off us – please do what you can".



And for twenty years, thanks to you, we have been doing just that. Doing all we can to help the poorest families – and therefore helping everyone living in all the villages we have adopted. Goat's milk has been improving the health of the children. Water near at hand from our handpumps means that not only do children go to school, instead of walking miles every day for every drop the families need, but the old people are also spared that terrible struggle day after day. And vegetables are growing in our villages.

We have trained hundreds of midwives – my admiration for these brave young women is boundless. The lives they have saved - young girls no longer forced to endure FGM – births, and deaths, registered – the happiness of a healthy baby – how can one quantify that? Thankfully fewer orphans, children lovingly cared for by their own mothers, no longer at risk from dangerously obstructed labour. I think of parents sleeping without worry as their little ones are no longer wracked with coughing in the smoke of fires trying to keep them warm – two simple blankets and chest infections are fewer.



More people die in Sudan from malaria than from any other disease. Our mosquito nets make such a difference. I'm told that the incidence of malaria in our villages has dropped by two thirds.

But that is not all! Climate Change – can we help?

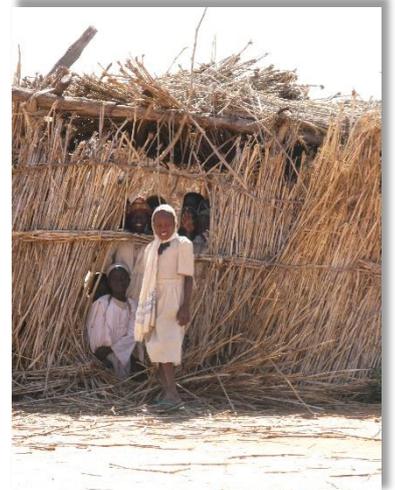
Yes we can and since 2007 and we have been doing just that! We plant trees – hundreds of them! We have had failures, but over the years we have learnt how to grow trees in the desert! And now the animals are returning. Yes – truly. Because of Kids for Kids. It is hard to believe, but I was told that rabbits and foxes have been seen in our community forests. Animals that have not been seen in North Darfur for decades. I saw two hornbills during my most recent visit.

Please help me to plant more trees.

P.T.O.

But 2022 is going to be one of the most challenging we have faced

Already the UN is warning of exceptional humanitarian need – they say 1 in 3 people will be facing starvation. That is truly shocking. Across the whole of Sudan people are struggling to survive. Chillingly, when things are bad in the country as a whole, they are worse in Darfur. Violence, since the military coup last October, has escalated. Hundreds of people have fled their homes. The harvest is 25% of what it should be in many parts. I am already planning emergency help. Your donations ‘for the greatest need’ are going to be needed more than ever before. But we will also adopt five villages this year - 2,842 children – I wish it could be more – and I am waiting to hear how much a new kindergarten will cost as education is essential. There can be no hope for the future if we let down the children.



The political situation is more worrying than I can remember, but of course we cannot, must not, give up. Kids for Kids is helping the poorest of the poor – people the rest of the world overlook, forget, ignore. But we do not. These are families like us, with the same aspirations for their children. And thanks to the dedication of the Darfurians themselves, who volunteer to serve on the Kids for Kids Steering Committee in El Fasher, overseeing all our projects, I know that every pound you donate will reach those in need of our help. We are supported by wonderful people in Khartoum and Darfur and, especially in this time of hardship, when conditions have never been worse, I cannot thank them enough for enabling our projects not only to continue, but to help more people this year than ever before.

I have not mentioned Covid-19 – but yes, that too is ravaging Sudan. We continue to give soap, to give hope. And we must not stop planting trees. The future is in our hands, for us too.

We cannot help everyone in need – but you are helping us to transform many lives and as those leaders said so long ago to me ‘By helping the poorest you are helping us too’. Please don’t stop!

Our motto continues to be ‘One goat at a time’ – and that means, One Child at a Time - please.

**Patricia Parker OBE
Founder**

