

HELPING THE CHILDREN OF SUDAN

SINCE fighting began in Sudan in April 2023, many children and families have been struggling to get access to basic essentials such as clean water, food and medicine. Charities like Kids for Kids have been

helping by setting up emergency appeals and making sure the young children there aren't forgotten. Here, we find out more about Kids for Kids and its incredible founder Patricia Parker OBE.



● What's happening in Sudan?

A war broke out in Sudan last year when the country's military leadership started to clash. The fighting began between the country's regular army and a paramilitary force called the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and it continues to this day. More than 11 million people have now been forced to flee their homes (according to UN figures).

● What is Kids for Kids?

Kids for Kids was set up in 2001 and aims to transform the lives of children living in poverty in Darfur, Sudan. The charity adopts villages, introducing sustainable projects identified, and run, by the villagers themselves.

Since the war began in Sudan, Kids for Kids has been helping the many families who have fled to their villages for survival. The charity's goats are providing children with protein-rich milk to drink, their donkeys are acting as ambulances and their chickens are providing eggs to the elderly. Their paravets are looking after the animals, while their hand pumps are being used to give people clean, accessible water.

Healthcare in the country has also broken down so the charity's health centres, midwives & first aiders are helping to save lives. Their mosquito nets are also helping to slow the spread of malaria and other related diseases and their blankets are keeping children warm.



Goats are loaned to families to provide milk

● How did one boy's walk for water inspire the launch of Kids for Kids?

Patricia Parker OBE knew she had to do something after meeting 9-year-old Ibrahim, who walked seven hours to fetch water for his family in Darfur, Sudan, yet one of the largest aquifers in Africa lies under the region. Patricia's immediate thought was that she and her family could provide a hand pump near the little boy's home at Um Ga'al. She asked to meet his mother. They found her camped out under trees near a wadi (dry riverbed) with her other four children. They were there – it was safe then to leave the village – because their three little goats could eat the twigs and leaves.

Patricia was offered their evening meal, a bowl of goat's milk. Patricia quickly realised that goats were crucial to the health of her children. They provided the nutrients and protein to ward off malnutrition. She could see how important these little goats were, however three were not enough to sustain (look after) them. She spoke to the village leaders and had asked them about loaning five goats to the poorest family and whether this would cause jealousy. They said it would take away the burden of supporting them.

Being in the village, Patricia realised how impoverished these families were. She spoke to the women and young girls in the village to find out what life was like. They told her how terrified they were of childbirth. The only help in a village was an untrained Traditional Birth Attender.

Patricia said: "I had now moved on from thinking how I personally needed to provide a hand pump to doing much more. I had already identified providing goat loans, hand pumps for clean water, donkeys to carry water,

paravets to care for the animals and trained midwives and first aid workers. I went back to Khartoum and five days later, with the help of friends there – who still support us through our Khartoum Committee – created Kids for Kids on 8 March 2001."

Since 2001, Kids for Kids has adopted 110 villages and transformed the lives of 590,000 people.



Patricia Parker OBE

● How can you help the people of Sudan?

Sorghum (a type of plant), mosquito nets, veterinary drugs, spare parts and repair kits for hand pumps are what villagers are desperate for. They have run out of everything, even soap. Can you help a boy like Ibrahim? Perhaps you could take part in a sponsored challenge such as a walk for water? Would your school adopt Kids for Kids? Find out more and how you can help at www.kidsforkids.org.uk.

