

THERE ARE MIRACLES EVEN IN DARFUR



Readers may recall that one of the most recent charities to benefit from the fundraising efforts of ICING in Riyadh was KIDS FOR KIDS in Sudan.

K4K Trustees, Patricia Parker MBE and Alastair King-Smith, returned to the UK from Darfur this week after completing their second visit this year to remote villages. They made the journey to check up on the help KIDS FOR KIDS continues to provide, despite increasing threat of attack to anyone travelling in vehicles in the region.

“The UN told us that no track is safe,” said Patricia, “but there is less risk the older and more basic the vehicle. We travelled in rented Landrovers and did not encounter any problems, other than intimidating stops at government checkpoints. But it was worth the risk because of what we learnt from villagers.”

KIDS FOR KIDS is one of the few organisations giving help to families beyond the camps, yet 67% of the population of North Darfur is still living in villages. “This withdrawal of even the most basic help, combined with the effects of violence, has resulted in enormous hardship” said Patricia. “The doctor at Mallit Hospital, which is responsible for over 163,000 people, told us that it is normal for him to treat 3 to 4 severely malnourished children every single week. And those are the ones that reach him. It can take many dangerous hours on a donkey to get to the hospital and many people leave the journey too late. We funded the training of 22 first aid workers recently at the urgent request of villagers who told us that there was no health care of any sort other than the hospital. One of the things I wanted to check was if this had been money well spent. It is.”

Ahmed Mohammed Ateem in Shegra is the only health worker for 6000 people. He has treated 141 different cases, including giving I/V fluids and injections and has helped vaccinate 1000 people against polio in inaccessible SLA areas. He is giving classes on public health and sanitation which has mobilized the community to build 50 latrines and to collect and burn rubbish. Recently two old men, aged 77 & 85, were brought to him in a desperate attempt to save their lives. They were from Abou Showk camp

Below: Kids with their Kids in Darfur



and had become lost while searching for their families. They were both in coma. He saved their lives. KIDS FOR KIDS must continue to fund the training of first aid workers like him – at the very least until other agencies can be persuaded to give help beyond the camps.

KIDS FOR KIDS projects are designed to help people to help themselves and the simple loan of 6 goats provides a chance for a family to transform itself.

“This week we were told how our goats have helped Kubra Abdel Rahman Ahmed whose husband has had to leave his family every summer for 3 to 4 months, only able to return if and when the rains come. When food is almost impossible to find, the father is just another mouth to feed. His wife has to struggle alone to feed their children in his absence.

Now that the goats are multiplying the family has milk for themselves, and extra to sell; they have also sold 4 male kids for \$50 each (the price of goats is soaring in Darfur). This husband is now completely settled at home with his children, looking after the flock and helping to set up community organizations.”

The average weight of children in the KIDS FOR KIDS families with goats was high compared to non-beneficiary families, according to a UNICEF survey. It is unusual to see a child who is not malnourished in non KIDS FOR KIDS villages.

Handpumps installed this year, thanks to help from UNICEF, make an enormous difference. “Without them, during the rainy season people use contaminated water with high incidences of diarrhoea and in the summer months they must walk many hours to get water.”

In Majdoub B, for example, the 1750 inhabitants now walk just 10 minutes for clean water from their new handpump. Children can attend school regularly when their water doesn’t make them sick, and when they do not need to walk all day to collect it. Families are now even growing a few vegetables. “A really exciting project too is our new Community Nursery there with trees from our tree nursery in El Fasher. Villagers, people from the camps, even the military police, students from National Service, and members of the SLA, all helped rescue our seedlings when the nearby wadi burst its banks – a true testament to the shared belief in the importance of trees to Darfur’s future.” Visitors to Abou Shouk camp can now see KIDS FOR KIDS trees growing green above the tents.

Recent contributions to ICING have been made by the Multinational School after their fund-raising Country & Western Evening, The Society of George from their Quiz Night and the Village Fete organisers after a successful family day at the residence. We hope to bring you pictures of how the cash has been spent in due course.