

TOGETHER FOR SUDAN — The Bishop Mubarak Fund

Website: <http://www.togetherforsudan.org>

Registered UK Charity No. 1075852

MARCH 2007



Dear Friends of Sudan,

It takes a while to stop celebrating a significant milestone on a long journey. So even though **Together for Sudan** marked its tenth birthday last year, we are still rejoicing over graduation of some 2,500 women from TFS literacy classes since our work began and the expectation of over 100 TFS university graduates by the end of 2007. We are pleased that our two ongoing teacher training schemes, in the Khartoum and Kadugli areas, give us the opportunity to contribute to both individual welfare and national development. **Together for Sudan** is a great success. The reason is simple: We ask displaced and marginalised people, women in particular, what they need. Then we work with them to achieve it.

Change, however, is always a part of life. And Sudan is changing rapidly. The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement has brought relative stability to some areas of Sudan and thousands of southerners are returning home in hope of a better life than that which they have found in squatter settlements around Khartoum. We are proud that some of these people are women whom we have taught to read, children whose self-help basic schools we have enabled to stay open by paying teachers salaries, and teachers trained by us who will now contribute to the development of the south.

In both Khartoum area and in the Nuba Mountains **Together for Sudan** is widely known and appreciated for our education projects as well as for our education support projects such as the Eye Care Project and the HIV/AIDS Awareness Outreach. Women's literacy classes and children's kindergartens are increasing in the Kadugli area of the Nuba Mountains as the result of our teacher training and monitoring project and **Together for Sudan** has now been invited by community leaders to train teachers in Nuba Mountains areas formerly controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, areas where there has been no teacher training for over 20 years.

Power to the Powerless through Education! Representatives of some 50 women recently trained as kindergarten teachers in the Nuba Mountains, the first ever kindergarten teacher training in that area, gather outside our Kadugli office. The hope and courage of these women is inspiring.

Hearing that an opportunity to help their children and grandchildren was available, Nuba women have flocked to the training and demanded more. We hope to carry out four more training courses for kindergarten teachers in the Kadugli area this summer.



EDUCATING ON MANY LEVELS

Together for Sudan's basic work is education of women and children. In addition to university scholarships and women's literacy classes we provide **teacher training programmes for literacy, kindergarten and basic school teachers** in both the Khartoum area and the Nuba Mountains. One of our earlier projects, which is still ongoing, was even more direct. In an effort to bridge the gap until the Sudanese government assumes responsibility for education, in 2000 Together for Sudan began paying teachers salaries in self-help basic schools set up by displaced and marginalised people. **Small Together for Sudan stipends to 96 kindergarten and basic school teachers in 25 schools from Khartoum to Juba to Abyei is certainly a major reason most of these schools continue to function.** Several schools have been restarted or kept from closing when we were able to offer teachers salaries.

Recently, we have begun to receive **requests for vocational training for a generation of young people** deprived by war of even an elementary education. So we shall fundraise specifically with this need in mind and hope eventually to include young men in our vocational training as they are already included in our teacher training programme.

A visit to a self-help school is always a special experience. If they are in class under the (relative!) control of a teacher, the children will sing at the top of their lungs, insisting that "You are most welcome here today!". If they are outside the classroom, they will come running with shouts of "Khawaja jai!" ("A foreigner has come!") hoping to have their photos taken and looking for a chance to hold your hand. Except in the poorest of circumstances the children wear bright uniforms which indicate the school to which they belong. But look more closely and you will see that many of these small scholars are suffering from respiratory infections, malnutrition and hunger. They are the reason the **Together for Sudan Breakfast Project** was started and, despite all obstacles, continues to struggle on in selected schools.

Education comes in many forms. One of the most urgent needs in Sudan is for further information about the global HIV/AIDS epidemic and what Sudanese people can do to protect themselves. **Together for Sudan's HIV/AIDS Awareness Outreach** was the first major effort in the Khartoum area, and remains the most acclaimed, to inform people how to protect themselves against AIDS and how to live with HIV/AIDS in the family and the community. Our three HIV/AIDS Awareness Outreach teams conducted **108 outreaches last year in the settlements of two million displaced people around Khartoum, reaching an estimated 16,000 persons.** But this is only the beginning of an enormous task. Meanwhile, we are searching for funding with which to broaden our small home-based care work, a component of the HIV/AIDS Outreach which offers physical and emotional support to afflicted families and individuals.



Education can be life saving. This young mother could not find space inside the packed classroom of a school at Jaborrana IDP settlement. But she was determined to find out from the HIV/AIDS Awareness Outreach team how she might protect herself and safeguard the future for her child. There are no accurate statistics on the number of Sudanese who are HIV positive but numbers seem to be rising rapidly as populations shift. There is need, moreover, of further training for our three outreach teams.

OPENING THE EYES OF THE BLIND

There is a correlation between illiteracy and defective vision. Both conditions prevent reading under normal conditions, create serious impediments to full participation in society and are obstacles to employment.

Literacy classes were among the first Together for Sudan projects for the obvious reason that literacy empowers people.

During my January trip to Sudan I visited **Together for Sudan** women's literacy classes in Wad Bashir and Thawra 54, settlements for displaced persons in the desert outside Khartoum. Both are among areas which have been bulldozed in the past three years, the land on which people were squatting sold to developers and hundreds of families, often with only a mother to support them, scattered. I visited two **Together for Sudan** women's literacy classes where the number of students has dropped dramatically. Not only are families leaving for the south or other nearby settlements, but with increased prosperity in Khartoum, more displaced women have found work as housemaids. As they cannot manage a long day at work followed by class, they drop out.

As the academic year ends in Khartoum this month, we are down to 15 women's literacy classes in the Khartoum area and many of these lost most of their students as the year progressed. **Together for Sudan** operates in response to popular demand and we shall conduct a survey this summer to find out more clearly what is happening and how our literacy project needs to change in the Khartoum area to meet current needs.

The **Together for Sudan** women's literacy project is at a turning point. A positive factor in this situation is that the government is at last beginning to offer literacy training in some IDP areas around Khartoum. Therefore, we hope, at least in the near term, to give increased attention to the Nuba Mountains where our literacy classes have been increasing. Following teacher training last year, we have 20 classes enrolling some 500 women in the Kadugli area.

Meanwhile, the Eye Care Project set up in July 2002 as a support project for the Literacy Project, is flourishing in the Khartoum area and, since last September, in the Kadugli area as well. Two Eye Care Outreaches were carried out in Kadugli in September and December under the direction of Together for Sudan sponsored ophthalmologists from Khartoum, reaching over 2,000 people. A third outreach is scheduled in the same area during March and there are, of course, already requests from other Nuba areas that they be included. Priority is given to women, children and the elderly.

The Eye Care Outreach has also become one of **Together for Sudan's** largest Medicine Box sites. In addition to treating eyes, the ophthalmologists who work with us dispense medicines for dysentery, skin infections, burns, wounds, sexually transmitted diseases, worm infestation, scabies and a variety of other ailments presented during the Eye Care Outreach by people with no other access to medical assistance.



The Ability to Read: a basic human right.

A granny and a young mother wait in the late afternoon heat for their literacy class to begin. The enduring hope of Sudanese women is an inspiration to all who know them. "Teach us to read," the women say, "and we will help ourselves and our children." **Together for Sudan** believes that women's education is the basic building block of civil society. We shall continue to make that benefit available to Sudanese women. This is peace building at the grassroots which benefits first family, then society and eventually the country as a whole.

TOGETHER FOR SUDAN is “Building Peace through Service.” Our core values are:

** Education as a human right. * The empowerment of women for a better future. * Response to what marginalised people say they need. * Respect for people of different religious and ethnic backgrounds. * Personal and community empowerment through service. * Promotion of volunteerism. * Provision of basic medical and logistical support for education. * Combating HIV/AIDS through education.*

Now in our 11th year of service to the Sudanese people, Together for Sudan is moving from being a small charity to a medium size charity. Among our current partners are Canada Fund, CARE International, The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, The Department for International Development (UK), Light for the World, The Mohamed Ibrahim Trust, Manos Unidas and Refugees International Japan. However, grants from large partners are often short term and for specific projects. Fundraising, probably our most difficult task, is a continuous and difficult process.

In this past year Together for Sudan spent only some £200,000 in total for all our activities. This is astonishing when you consider what is being accomplished. But it is possible because all of us, other than our personnel in Khartoum and Kadugli, are volunteers. Core funding, money which may be used for administrative purposes or when urgent needs arise, remains our greatest financial need.

Please join us in this work of reaching out to people who are often the poorest of the poor, the displaced, widowed mothers, orphaned children, people who will remain uneducated and vulnerable if we do not intervene on their behalf. You are invited to partner with Together for Sudan in this essential and deeply rewarding work of long term peace building at the grassroots.

With appreciation for working with us to help the Sudanese towards a better future,



Lillian Craig Harris OBE
Director

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33 Balmoral Road, Trowbridge,
Wiltshire, BA14 OJS, England.
U.S. dollar cheques should be made payable to The Bishop Mubarak Fund and sent to the same address.

St. Philip's Basic School in Soba Aradi.

Children remain inside during their break both because of the fierce heat and because there are no playground facilities. TFS pays the salaries of seven teachers at this school built by the children's parents.

