

Patrica Parker, Chair of Kids for Kids has kindly sent us a report dealing with news about ICING's most recent donation. ICING donations have totalled over SR500,000 since 2007.

Kids for Kids is currently assisting over 200,000 people in 51 villages. This includes 10 new villages which were brought into the programme in March 2009 and the range of activities supported by **Kids for Kids** is gradually being implemented. The Village Development Committees and Animal Loan Committees have been trained and the families will shortly be receiving their goat and donkey loans. Representatives from the villages are already undertaking training as village midwives .

The funds provided by ICING have been assigned to training and equipping the village midwives and paravets.



Training of midwives

The lack of basic health facilities and services in the villages in Darfur particularly affects the health of women. The average age of women in the villages is only 34 years due to the high rates of maternal mortality. One of the greatest problems is the lack of trained midwives. Women speak of the problems they face in childbirth when the only care available in most, but not even in all, villages is provided by the traditional birth attendants who are basically the older women in the village but they have had no training even in basic hygiene. Due to the widespread practice of female genital mutilation in the communities, obstruction often prevents natural birth. This means that many women in the second stages of labour have to go to hospital. This means travelling on a donkey or on a stretcher slung between two donkeys, frequently for over 60 miles across sand which can take 2 days, in order to reach the hospital. In addition to the danger to the health of the mother and the unborn child, travelling any distance in the present situation of conflict and insecurity is perilous with exposure to risk of attack.

Hence in response to requests from women, **Kids for Kids** is training village midwives in association

Where does the money go?

with the Ministry of Health. With the construction of the new dormitory at the Midwives Training School with the generous support of ICING, 40 midwives from **Kids for Kids** villages are currently under training. This has enabled us to make up the backlog of trainee midwives which had built up due to the previous limitations on training places which has now been rectified by the construction of the new dormitory. However, a further 30 midwives still need to be trained next year to provide each village with 2 midwives to provide mutual support, in addition to the requirements for the next 10 villages. Thus the training of midwives is an on-going, and extremely crucial, programme.



The women are chosen by the communities on the basis of established criteria. The women trained are generally between 19 and 32 years of age. During the 12 month course the village midwives are trained in basic hygiene, ante- and post-natal care and nutrition. Where necessary an additional 3 months' literacy training is provided. During the last training course, the 24 trainees delivered 280 healthy babies.

The midwives have an important role in reducing the mortality rate amongst women and babies through:

- Provision of delivery services using modern techniques;
- Referring difficult cases at an early stage to the provincial HQ which is crucial in saving the lives of the mother and baby;
- Provision of extension services to the community, particularly women, on hygiene, dangerous diseases like KIV/AIDS, and harmful practices e.g. female genital mutilation;
- Taking part in immunisation campaigns;
- Combating malnutrition and diarrhoea amongst children.

Kids for Kids provides each trained midwife with a midwifery kit and a cross-bred donkey to enable them to reach their clients more easily and a solar lantern is provided in each village which is a great asset for night-time deliveries. The services of the midwives are much appreciated by the women and one midwife, Nadia, has delivered 185 healthy babies in the six months since the end of her training, covering a wide area as women actively seek her assistance. Training as a midwife gives the women considerable status in the community and greatly increases their marriage prospects. Being a midwife can also be a lifeline for single or infertile women who are unlikely to marry and whose prospects are restricted to the life of a domestic servant.