

Winter 2008 Update

With the Darfur conflict no closer to resolution, and with the entire nation of Sudan preparing for an eventual referendum on the country's unity, the need for effective development programs in the border region now becomes more pivotal than ever before. CASS is preparing for the next step.

A Bi-Annual Newsletter

Winter 2008

CASS and Darfur

It's been a decade of influence now in south Sudan and CASS's work has become more foundational to the future prosperity of the region. Working in close partnership with key

As the refugees from Darfur continue to emerge, some new initiatives are starting
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Issues of Health

With the arrival of peace between north and south Sudan, numerous efforts are being made to build community clinics. In the company of a former federal minister and key partners, CASS makes moves to expand into healthcare.
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A New School for a New Future



only one for 600 kilometers. Find out how you can pitch in.
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A generous gift from a former Prime Minister has opened the door to build a new high school in the region - the

Ideas For Help

Various projects provide unique opportunities to have a key effect half a world away. Help build a region one step at a time.



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CASS's January Trip Begins the Next Stage

Every January, **Canadian Aid for Southern Sudan** takes teams of Canadians to the region. Trip members come from all walks of life - educators, politicians, healthcare specialists, students, etc. - but each are tasked with specific responsibilities in overseeing and furthering **CASS** projects. The upcoming trip in January will be no different.

Dr. Carolyn Bennett, former federal minister of public health, will be returning again this year and will be helping to assess the ongoing health needs of the region and how Canadians can respond to the unfolding situation in Aweil East. As will all other aspects of **CASS's** work, the influx of internally-displaced people from Darfur has placed great stress on our functioning programs, as local communities and their leadership seek to respond to growing pressures. Nowhere is this more true than in the health challenges faced by the people and the lone health clinic in the region.

STAND, a student group with chapters in universities and high schools across Canada, sent two of their leaders with us last year to visit the refugees from Darfur. As the name suggests - Students Taking Action Now - Darfur - **STAND's** primary role has been to draw attention to the ongoing plight of the Darfur people and to advocate for needed action. This year the organization will send three more of its members to assist **CASS** in assessing the needs of the ever-growing Darfur community in Aweil East.

Other members of the team will be overseeing the expansion of the Water Project - a program designed to spread the use of clean water throughout the region. Currently, 80% of all diseases are water-borne and the hope is that the new program will significantly reduce the pressures on the local medical clinic. A sampling of families has been selected and will be trained on how to ensure the water is purified before given to their respective families. We have high hopes for this initiative.

Individuals will be assigned to interview those families who have received goats from Abuk's Herd in the past year, to ensure that the program is proceeding as planned. At \$60 per goat, the program is a great way to assist returning families.

And we are about to begin the largest project **CASS** has undertaken since its inception - the construction of a high school to service the region. The scope of this undertaking is significant and will help us to culminate the long-held goal of providing both primary and secondary education to the region. The released arrived students from Darfur will also be permitted to be educated in this school - the only one of its kind for 600 kilometers.

The January 2009 team is already getting staged for the journey to south Sudan. The key pieces and individuals are in place. We will be reporting back to you in the spring as to the results of the trip. In the meantime, please support these projects by donating to the projects listed on the back page. In the meantime, **THANK YOU** for your assistance.



As the fleeing internally-displaced people from Darfur come face-to-face with a new future, CASS is responding to the crisis.



A Growing Challenge

You will recall that in the trip to south Sudan almost two years ago, CASS officials discovered a group of 100,000 Darfur refugees who had fled that conflicted region, moving eastward until they camped in an area close to where CASS operates its programs. The situation was so dire that many died within the next few weeks.

Upon returning to Canada, we were successful in acquiring \$3,000,000 to assist these troubled families. Thousands more have now accompanied those early refugees, leaving the services provided in Aweil East greatly challenged.

Since those early months, CASS has worked diligently to provide cooking implements, schooling, malaria bed nets and emergency water supplies to those arriving in the region. And the high school planned for construction by CASS in the region this coming year will also be open to those emerging from Darfur. Though the challenges are

immense, already encouraging signs are taking place in Canada that give us encouragement.

STAND

Students Tacking Action Now on Darfur (STAND) is a student action group spread throughout many universities and high schools in Canada. CASS's work with the emerging Darfur people flooding into our region provided STAND with a unique opportunity to personally provide assistance in a direct and immediate way.

STAND will be accompanying us again to Sudan in the upcoming trip and has also stepped up its advocacy efforts - much appreciated steps.

Paul Martin

The former prime minister has donated \$100,000 from his own funds to CASS to begin the construction of the high school near the Darfur border. As more more has come in for the project, we are able to move ahead more quickly on what

will truly be one of the unique high schools in Africa.

Canadian Generosity

In July 2008, CASS's executive director travelled to Grand Prairie, Alberta, to receive a cheque for \$10,000 from a community effort led by Louis Chabot and the local Rotary Club. Initiatives this have sprung up across Canada, thereby multiplying CASS's ability to respond to the emerging Darfur challenge. If you wish to join them, you can make a donation online at www.casscanada.net.



The Need for Healthcare

From the time of CASS's very first trip to south Sudan in 1998, it has been obvious that disease and related death in the region has been a major preoccupation.



Carolyn Bennett - up close and personal

One of the key medical clinics in the region, run by Doctors Without Borders, has pulled up stakes and moved deep into Darfur, leaving the small clinic CASS supports desperately undersupplied and overburdened.

The clinic itself is run by the Diocese of Rumbek (one of our partners in the area) and has focused on all manners of disease and illness, including leprosy. Each time CASS visits the clinic it brings along small amounts of needed medical supplies and seeks to assist in any way it can. But with the closure of the Doctors Without Borders clinic, we realized the DOR clinic would be swamped and so the decision was made to concentrate more of our efforts this year on the medical needs of the community.

CASS was greatly helped by the presence of former Canadian Health Minister Carolyn Bennett on the journey. Though this was her first trip to Africa, Carolyn is no stranger to the concept of administering health care from the "ground-up," at the community level. Properly administered public healthcare is her passion and she was able to apply her skills as a doctor and former minister to the region.

Ms. Bennett camped out with the Darfur refugees and saw their health needs firsthand. Her visit to the DOR clinic encouraged the local staff but it was obvious they were overworked and fatigued. The former minister's skills in the community healthcare field will be of great assistance to CASS in the future, as we seek to assist the clinic.

In our last newsletter you learned about The Water School, a unique concept that uses the sun's ultraviolet rays to remove deadly organisms by placing plastic bottles of local water directly in the sun for a day. CASS has now partnered with The Water School and this past trip saw us building the foundation for a vital



Alex Lau testing the waters

new public health component in the area.

For Alex Lau, a financial investor, this was his third trip with CASS, only this time he sought to provide leadership in launching The Water School project. Alex visited local water supplies, testing the quality of the water and laying the groundwork for providing clean water to the area. The key component is public education and CASS will be working with The Water School to make sure the process is implemented properly

and eventually put in the local school curriculum. It's easy to invest in providing clean water for a family - \$50 - and you'll hear more about the opportunities in future newsletters. When you consider that 80% of diseases in the region come from unclean water, it becomes obvious that providing clean water could well become the main method of providing effective healthcare to the needy families of the area.

But medicines are still important, especially to a small clinic facing insurmountable demand for assistance. To our assistance this year came, Janet Tufts, Executive Director of the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame. Janet assisted in collecting \$20,000 worth of quality medicines to take on the trip and donate to the clinic. This was done in partnership with Health Partners International, where 4 physician packs (assortment of medicines for Africa) were donated and delivered. These packs were filled with \$5000 worth of needed medicine each. Some of the antibiotics were used immediately, as the supply had run out in the clinic.

Ahok had walked over three hours to Gordhim with her 10-month old baby boy Dend. Dend arrived at the clinic on January 16, 2008 malnourished and dehydrated. He had been sick since June 2007.

The next day Dend went into crisis. The doctor (Sylvia from Slovakia) prescribed Cetril which had just arrived from Health Partners the previous day. Unfortunately, Dend was unable to keep the medication down - he was constantly throwing up and continued to get weaker, to the point where his life was in danger.

Sylvia and the nurse (Harriet from Uganda) agreed that Dend needed IV. Getting IV into little Dend's hand was a huge challenge for Sylvia who had only been in Gordhim for one week and had received only minimal training on caring for malnourished children. The latex gloves provided by Health Partners came in handy during this procedure.



Janet Tufts

Poor little Dend suffered through two attempts with the IV - one in each hand. It was clearly very painful for him but he was unable to shed tears due to his dehydration. His cries were mere whimpers as he had not an ounce of energy.

The only "tool" the health care professionals had to comfort their little patient was one of the dolls from Health Partners. It provided a glimpse of hope and calmness amidst the commotion and uncertainty of this medical crisis. Thankfully, Dend survived the ordeal. This story was repeated numerous times with so many people requiring assistance. Thanks to Janet's hard and determined efforts, there was measured success.

Laura Tripp, a lawyer in London, Ontario, assisted on the visit in many ways and accompanied Carolyn Bennett on her visit to the local DOR clinic. For Laura it was an emotional occasion, as the young children in the clinic suffering from numerous health complications touched her in deep ways that will be long-lasting and challenging.



Londoner Laura Tripp

Participating in so many different ways, Laura came away convinced that the best solutions for Sudan are community based and done in conjunction with local leaders and indigenous NGOs. But for all her hard efforts, the precarious plight of the children of south Sudan is the thing that will remain with Laura.

If it wasn't for the help of all these concerned Canadians, the work of CASS could not expand into these new necessary endeavors that are destined to improve the quality of life in the Aweil East community. A special thanks to all of them, many of whom have visited Sudan frequently and whose efforts lead to long-lasting effects.

CASS Projects

From assisting returned slaves and child soldiers to expanding educational opportunities and assisting refugees from Darfur, Canadian Aid for Southern Sudan continues to enhance life in Aweil East.

Abuk's Herd

The concept is simple and yet it has worked to great effect in southern Sudan. Families returning from slavery or exile are provided a few goats from which they can start their own herds. This enables them to have a sustainable beginning in their home communities. For the cost of \$60 per goat (\$30 per baby goat), entire families have a chance at a new life. CASS secures the goats from local markets, assisting the local economy and community development at the same time. Abuk's Herd has

quickly become CASS's most popular project.

Smart Aid

Life for the women of south Sudan is onerous and burdensome, but through new small business initiatives, life for many has begun to change. Whether it's starting their own sewing business, operating a grinding mill for grain or opening a business for the recycling of water bottles, women have a chance to improve the lives of their families while at the same time acquiring status and leadership within their own

communities. As peace has continued to spread throughout the region, CASS has used it's "Smart Aid" program to energize the local economy and elevate the status of women in their respective communities.

Darfur

In January of last year, CASS representatives discovered 100,000 Darfur refugees hiding in the region to escape the conflict. CASS worked with Senator Romeo Dallaire to bring the plight of these people to the knowledge of the Canadian Parliament. As

their numbers increase the need for action has become urgent. CASS has been working with Belinda Stronach and Rick Mercer to provide mosquito netting to protect these families from malaria. The disease is the largest killer of small children in Africa and something must be done. A net costs \$10 and can protect an entire family. As the Darfur crisis worsens, CASS has been working with Canadian parliamentarians to develop some kind of appropriate and timely response. Yet the hour is late and any more delay could result in even more devastation. We will be

pursuing our options throughout this coming year and will keep you updated.

100%

Canadian Aid for Southern Sudan is a fully volunteer organization. This permits us to donate 100% of all donations to our programs in the Sudanese south. A generous benefactor has helped cover the costs of such things as mailings and administration. While based in London, Ontario, CASS's board is also made up of individuals from Toronto and Victoria, British Columbia.

Want to Help?

Some Christmas Ideas That Make a Difference

CASS's programs can only remain effective with your ongoing support. Here are some practical ways you can assist. And remember, because we are a fully volunteer organization, 100% of all money donated goes directly to the programs in Sudan.

Canadian Aid for Southern Sudan

35 Bruce Street

London, Ontario N6C 1G5

(519) 679-1429

email: cass.can@sympatico.ca

web: www.casscanada.net



Brick for secondary school - \$10



Baby goat - \$30



Goat for Abuk's Herd - \$60



Clean water for family - \$50



Helps send a girl to school - \$100



Starts a sewing business - \$500

Charitable Receipt Number - BN 86394 8212 RR0001