



Together For Sudan

in partnership with Light for the World

Eye Care Project – Nuba Mountains

Final Report: July - December 2010

31 January 2011

Introduction

Together for Sudan is a British charity committed to education of women and children as a human right without religious or ethnic discrimination. Our motto is “Power to the Powerless through Education”. Although our centre of attention is on education, we are aware that many are prevented from studying because of poor sight. Together for Sudan has eight educational and educational support projects, among them our very popular Eye Care Project which is active in both the Khartoum area and in the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan to reduce eye problems and loss of sight among poor people in remote areas and those living in communities for the displaced.

South Kordofan state continues to suffer from the civil war of the 1980s and 90s. As a result the state lacks many essential services including health services. There are no ophthalmologists in the area other than one recently appointed to Kadugli hospital as a result of our work. Non-skilled medical assistants, an unequipped hospital in Kadugli (the only hospital in the area) and great poverty preclude treatment for and purchase of medicines by most people even if there is a pharmacy nearby.

Together for Sudan began its Eye Care Project in the Khartoum area in 2002 with funding from Refugees International Japan. Following this, other outreaches were funded by LIGHT FOR THE WORLD, including three outreaches in Kadugli, capital of south Kordofan state, and one each in Dilling, Abu Gebieha and Lagawa, all in South Kordofan. TFS has sought to reach people outside Kadugli because many live in remote areas and suffer from poverty, so much so that they cannot afford to pay transportation costs to Kadugli for eye care.

This report covers the TFS Eye Care activities in the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan during 2010, including six outreaches, as mentioned above.

Project Objectives

The overall objectives of the project in South Kordofan is to improve eye care among poor people in remote areas, to reduce eye diseases and sight loss through treatment for eye conditions and to provide corrective lenses for those in need.

Specific Objectives

- *Examination of 2,000 patients per year including children, women and elderly persons.
- *Provision of medicines including eye drops, injections and antibiotics to children and adults suffering from eye diseases.
- *Over a three year period (2008-2010) training of 10 ophthalmologist assistants, 100 teachers and 150 community leaders and other volunteers in hygiene and health education.
- *Equipment of Kadugli hospital with minor surgical tools.

Project Activities

During the three years, Together for Sudan carried out six outreaches in Kadugli, Dilling, Abu Gebieha and Lagawa. These outreaches were followed up with six post operative outreaches. Together for Sudan also trained 10 medical assistants to do minor operations in addition to providing five trainings concerning hygiene and health education which targeted 100 teachers and 150 community leaders. We also supplied Kadugli hospital with minor surgical tools.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Project activities were monitored by the TfS Project Coordinator and Assistant Project Coordinator under close supervision of the Country Coordinator by frequent communication with the TfS Field Representative in Kadugli. This allowed us to keep a close watch on the progress of activities. Also, the State Ministry of Health in South Kordofan State regularly sent a health supervisor to monitor TfS Eye Care Outreaches as well as trainings. TfS Director Dr. Lillian Craig Harris and one employee from Khartoum office visited the Nuba Mountains once a year to monitor TfS activities including the Eye Care Outreach. The TfS Field Representative produced periodic reports to the Khartoum office on implementation of project activities.



◀ *TfS Director Dr. Lillian Craig Harris and TfS Secretary Mr. Alan Goulty monitoring the Lagawa outreach during their visit to the Nuba Mountains in November 2010.*

Training Courses

During 2010 Together for Sudan carried out five training courses which targeted community leaders and school teachers. The training topics covered environmental health as well as eye hygiene and eye disease. This information was disseminated to community members and school children.

During the past three years TfS trained 10 medical assistants to do minor operations as well as 91 community leaders and 55 teachers on hygiene and health education subjects. **Some 40 teachers and 55 community leaders are still to be trained under this project, in addition to five teachers and four community leaders who were unable to complete the previous training¹.**

Causes for delay in executing the trainings on time were:

1. No training courses were conducted in the first year (2008) of the agreement, as TfS conducted the first outreach in May using its own resources before the rainy season which typically starts in June and ends in November.
2. After receiving funding in July 2008, priority was given to outreaches, as people kept asking us to do. The second outreach was conducted in December 2008 after the rainy season had subsided, following which the training courses started in 2009 with two in 2009 and three in 2010.
3. The Ministry of Health in Kadugli required TfS to do post operational follow up after each outreach. This was not in the original agreement and limited the timing of conducting the

¹ See proposal on this point in covering email

outreaches and training courses to 4-5 months in which to conduct two outreaches, two post operative follow-ups and two training courses.

For these reasons, the three remaining courses will be conducted in the first half of 2011.

Achievements

Numerous people in the Nuba Mountains have benefitted from TfS Eye Care outreaches. This has brought much praise for TfS and for Light for the World from both officials and citizens. During the reporting period TfS executed six outreaches, three of which were carried out in Kadugli and one each in Dilling, Abu Gebieha and Lagawa. All outreaches received post operative follow up.

During the reporting period of January-December 2010 a total of 3,410 patients were examined by the ophthalmologists, 468 patients were operated on successfully, 536 reading and sunglasses were distributed to the patients and necessary medicines were supplied to 1,717 patients. In addition to training 10 medical assistants on how to do minor surgery, 91 community leaders and 55 teachers were given hygiene and health care education.

Eye surgery by Dr. Abdallah at Lagawa in October 2010 ▶



Difficulties Faced

*Working with a limited budget posed considerable challenge in terms of market inflation to implement project activities. This resulted from lack of a contingency budget for unforeseen expenditure to meet inflation.

*TfS has borrowed surgical microscopes from both Kadugli and Khartoum hospitals to perform surgeries. However, when outreaches in the Nuba Mountains were organized in locations outside Kadugli, the administration of Kadugli hospital would generally not allow the large microscope to be taken from the hospital, pointing out that TfS should have its own operating microscope least the hospital's equipment be damaged. This request, although understandable, delayed the start of activities as negotiations sometimes lasted until the beginning of the outreach.

*Long rainy seasons in the area limits outreach activities to five or six months (December to May) in which to conduct two outreaches and two post operative follow-ups a month after each outreach – as well as two training courses. Moreover, the number of operations for the outreaches conducted in May and November are negatively affected by local farmers who need to prepare their lands for planting and, later, to harvest. Many people decline to be operated on in

these months as they need at least one month to recover from the operation and widespread poverty and subsistence living requires that they give priority to their agricultural work.

Recommendations

*To purchase at least one large microscope for operating

*Our ophthalmologists recommend that TfS consider purchasing an IOL (Intra Ocular Lenses) calculator in the future to measure Visual Acuity outcomes after eye operations.

Case Study

Mona Ali, 20 years old, from Lagawa locality in Nuba Mountains. She was examined in TFS eye care outreach in Lagawa in November 2010 and was subjected to operation to remove the damaged eye. The damaged eye was removed and successfully replaced with an artificial eye.

Mona and Dr. Abdallha after he removed Mona's eye ▶



◀ An artificial eye was given to Mona during the post operative follow up in December 2010