



UMCOR Sudan— Tools for Tomorrow

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UMCOR ADVANCE # 184385 SUDAN EMERGENCY

EXPANDING WORK MEETS MORE NEEDS

Since program operations began, UMCOR Sudan has distributed seeds and tools to over 5,000 families, enabling them to cultivate their farms, enhance their capacity to provide food for their children, and even generate a small income. The program has also distributed over 7,000 non-food items like blankets and tarps to families in need.

UMCOR Sudan's work is expanding as more needs are identified. Recognizing that the displaced people's needs go far beyond supply distribution, UMCOR's programs are growing to meet needs for education and health care. In addition to work within Darfur, UMCOR Sudan is positioned to engage in the forthcoming repatriation and reintegration of Southern Sudanese returnees. UMCOR Sudan is committed to serving the people of Sudan, regardless of their location.

Photo: An UMCOR community worker lifts young groundnuts to show how bountiful the crops would be come November's harvest.
Credit: UMCOR/Stephen Guy

February 2006 marks one year since UMCOR established work in the Darfur region of Sudan. This year has not been without its trials. Many complications and dangers plague UMCOR's work to bring relief and long term solutions to displaced people in South Darfur. But the difficulties pale in comparison to the successes of the past year. Tens of thousands of vulnerable people have been helped through UMCOR Sudan's programs.

UMCOR Sudan works in five camps in South Darfur, a region where few relief organizations operate within this troubled state in western Sudan. Below are some UMCOR programs that bring relief, healing, and hope to Darfurians.

HOSPITALITY

The reception center at El Ferdous camp is an UMCOR innovation. It sets this camp apart from others by its description of being the only humane reception center in the Darfur region. The Humanitarian Aid Commission and the World Food Programme named it a model for all other camps.

The center hosts some 20 to 25 families each month, collecting information about their home towns, families, and needs. After the interview a leader orients the family to the camp. The information collected at the intake interview is shared with others to ensure that the family's needs are met by UMCOR and other area organizations.

FOOD SECURITY

Good rainfall, new agriculture techniques, and adequate food to eat during the growing season have yielded a bountiful harvest in the Al Daein region of South Darfur, Sudan. With a grant from Ginghamburg United Methodist Church, Tipp City, Ohio, UMCOR distributed seeds to some 5,200 families (more than 25,000 people) displaced by the Sudan war and purchased tools from local blacksmiths to strengthen the economy in the region.

Threshing, provided by non-farm households; packaging seed for selling at local markets; and storing peanut seeds in anticipation of the next growing season further built the economy. To ensure success,



As the rainy season gets underway in Darfur, UMCOR has helped keep hope in the future alive by providing seeds and agricultural tools to displaced families. Here Adel Dut plants sorghum on land outside the camp.

Credit: Paul Jeffrey/UMCOR

UMCOR workers led training sessions in farming techniques, market prices and seed storage.

EMPOWERING WOMEN

“Teaching women to be self-sufficient is a first step in a community’s turnaround after decades of instability,” said Jane Ohuma, UMCOR’s head of mission in Sudan. Women can influence the nutrition of entire families, for instance. When they gain the confidence of learning new farming skills, they transmit that confidence, the skills and even additional income to their families.

Each head of household at the camp in Julha received millet and sorghum to plant in about four hectares. About half a dozen of these heads of household are women. Teaching them to intercrop, or mingle, these plantings with other seeds, such as ground nuts and beans, was the UMCOR agronomist, Abdul Rahim Malik. Okra and melon seeds are interplanted as cash crops.

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

UMCOR distributes emergency supplies to camp residents. Plastic sheeting becomes a roof that provides shade from the sun and protection from the rains. Jerry cans serve as water collectors from the water points in host communities and camps. Blankets provide warmth on the cool savanna evenings.

LONGING FOR HOME

The displaced would like to go back home, says Ms. Ohuma. Instead they have joined Sudan’s uprooted. For them, “back home” is uninhabitable. In Kubda, or Zalinge, or Muterr—towns in the Sudan’s largest state of Darfur—the wells are filled in with dirt or fouled with corpses. All the houses were looted and burned, and schools and community health clinics razed. The people lost everything they had.

They fled in the hundreds of thousands in all directions—west to Chad, eastward and southward to the region of their state known as South Darfur. Some fled from the southern states. Now they live in settlements and camps for the displaced.

UMCOR is helping to make their return home possible by supporting them in the camps and providing them with skills that will assist them long after their current situation ends. UMCOR’s records will help people find their way home when they can live in peace and safety.

CONTACT US

UMCOR
475 Riverside Drive, Room 330
New York, NY 10015.
Telephone: 800-554-8583
Email: umcor@gbgm-umc.org
www.umcor.org

