

## **Safe House for Homeless Girls – Khartoum, Sudan**

### Problem:

Sudan is the largest nation state in Africa. Its population is 30 million people of diverse ethnic groups. Official statistics cite over 93% of its citizens living in poverty. Sudan has for over three decades been in the midst of one of Africa's longest running civil wars which commenced directly after independence from the United Kingdom in 1955. The human death toll is estimated at nearly two million people with four million displaced since 1983.

The capitol city, Khartoum has a population of 7 million people. About two million of these are displaced people who live in camps surrounding the city. These camps, for the most part, have no roads, no electricity and no running water. The situation described has led to a large number of children living on the streets of Khartoum. According to official government figures compiled in 2003, the number of street children is estimated at nearly 40,000. These children have suffered trauma as a result of war and loss of family. They have no support network and their basic rights to life, health and family life are under threat every day.

Small girls have been seen living with groups of children with older boys in charge. Also, girls are periodically rounded up by the police and taken to a government camp for girls as are homeless boys sent to respective segregated camps. The children do not stay in these camps for long but prefer to be out on the streets. A Sudanese NGO, SABAH had a reception center for girls near the center of Khartoum to provide food, clothes, hygiene, health care and job training. It was disbanded when the girls began using SABAH facilities to primp for carrying out prostitution. Homeless children have a distrust of adults because they have been abused, mistreated, manipulated and neglected. They do not like being confined nor told what to do. They deal with almost constant stress and fear. They have learned coping habits of sniffing glue. They misuse and disrespect themselves and others. Any successful program beyond providing necessities for survival will have to address the children's anxiety issues, their beliefs about themselves and adults, and their maladaptive and addictive behaviors.

### Target Population:

Girls between the ages of three and twelve, who have been left to their own devices with no adult support and no permanent, stable home. This age group is chosen because it is believed that they will be more malleable than older girls who are tempted to adopt a life style of prostitution.

### Objectives:

- To provide a safe home setting initially for eight girls
- Provide a furnished house with bathroom, shower, kitchen facilities
- Walled in Courtyard with space for a vegetable, fruit, and flower garden
- Located within neighborhoods of Khartoum.
- To provide caretakers who will double as counselors and therapists, an administrator and an educator.

### Annual Budget:

\$10,000

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