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Giving Hope to the Hopeless

Food For The Poor's efforts to help struggling Third World schools have had a tremendous impact on the poorest of the poor. Children once mired in hopelessness now have an opportunity for a better future. Food For The Poor projects have rebuilt schools, provided furniture and supplies, established school-based feeding programs, set up special scholarships and assisted job training programs for teens and young adults. With a proper education, the poorest of poor can break the cycle of poverty and live a normal, productive life.



Food For The Poor's Efforts Empower Priests, Nuns Serving Third World's Poor

Since its inception in 1982, Food For The Poor has served the needy of the Caribbean by providing critically needed supplies to the priests, pastors and nuns who live and work among the poor.

Through this cooperative effort, more than \$225 million worth of aid has been provided to the poorest of the poor — everything from food and medical supplies to housing for the homeless and educational materials for impoverished schools.

"Food For The Poor's system is simple. We

go to the clergy and ask them what they need to better serve the poor," explained Ferdinand Mahfood, founder of Food For The Poor. "Our goal is to empower the church and its social outreach — to give the priests, pastors and nuns the tools they need to help the poor in their communities. They know who is in greatest need. They can do the best job of solving the problems of the poor."

Food For The Poor's benefactors also like the fact that this church-based method of distribution avoids government involve-

ment. It eliminates waste and allows more to reach the poor. More of each dollar donated gets to those in need.

"We welcome anyone who is interested in helping the poor of the Caribbean and Latin America to join our family of benefactors. We encourage individuals to contact our organization, ask questions and evaluate our effectiveness," Mahfood said. "Our success is based on the power of collective Christian charity. Every contribution is important — no matter how small — and every gift makes a difference."

Third World Schools Desperate For Furniture, Supplies

A group of barefoot boys and girls stands at the door of a large, dilapidated shack — a patchwork of sticks, wire, cardboard, rusted tin sheets and discarded lumber. A young man walks up, carrying a worn book under his arm. He opens the shack's door and the children rush in to take their seats on crude wooden benches.

School is now in session.

"The first time I saw a school in Haiti's slum, I was shocked. The whole class was sharing one book, and the teacher's only supplies were a worn blackboard and a piece of chalk. There were no desks or tables, no maps or charts — nothing," recalled Ferdinand Mahfood, founder of Food For The Poor. "I left that school with a burning desire to do something for that teacher and those poor children. I was determined to give them a fighting chance by providing them with a proper education."

Within weeks, the school Mahfood visited was rebuilt. Then Food For The Poor arranged to have it furnished with used tables, desks, chairs and other supplies acquired as "hand me downs" from schools in the United States.

"In the process of helping Haiti's poor, I discovered that many U.S. schools are a source for used furniture and supplies," Mahfood explained. "I discovered that the schools in America regularly renovate their classrooms and dump or warehouse the outdated furniture and supplies. The items are used, but they are still in good working order. Rather than see them go to waste, Food For The Poor set up a system to pick up the furniture and ship it to poor schools in the Third World. In that way, we were able to be good stewards of a resource and help those in greatest need."

After its first shipment of furniture and supplies was delivered to Haiti, Food For The Poor received hundreds of requests from other struggling schools. Many of the schools were founded by churches or missionaries, so Mahfood feels a special calling to assist them.

"These priests and nuns have unselfishly given their lives over to helping the poor," he said. "They deserve our prayers and support."

At this point, Food For The Poor's efforts are limited only by the expense of shipping the donated goods it collects.

"We've developed a good system for locating used furniture and supplies in the U.S., but we don't always have the funds we need to ship the trailers of goods overseas," he explained. "It can be painful when you know the need and you have access to the supplies, but you have to forfeit the goods because you can't afford to ship them. To do more, we desperately need contributions for shipping expenses."

To assist in these efforts, individuals can send a contribution to Food For The Poor, Dept. 12753, 550 SW 12th Avenue, Deerfield Beach, FL 33442. All donations are tax-deductible.



Who is Ferdinand Mahfood?

Pope John Paul II and Food For The Poor's founder, Ferdinand Mahfood, discussed the needs of the Caribbean's poor at a meeting in Kingston, Jamaica. Mahfood is a Knight of St. Gregory (conferred by Pope John Paul II), and he was recently honored with the Poverello Medal for the work among the poor. "I accept the honors but I believe the accolades should really go to the many benefactors who support the work of Food For the Poor. Our programs and services are only possible because of their sacrifice and dedication.

Ferdinand Mahfood began laying the groundwork for Food For The Poor after a dramatic religious conversion in 1976. Using

experience and connections he established during his years as a successful import/export businessman, he created a unique ministry to support the priests, pastors and nuns who help the poor in the Caribbean region. Mahfood also leads regular "pilgrimages" to Haiti and Jamaica with the goal of creating a stronger link between the church of the First World and the church of the Third World.

"I'm most happy and most at home when I am with the poor. In them, I see the love and beauty of Christ," Mahfood says. "That's why I chose Matthew 25:40 to represent the work of Food For the Poor. I believe serving the poor gives me the blessed opportunity to serve Jesus himself."